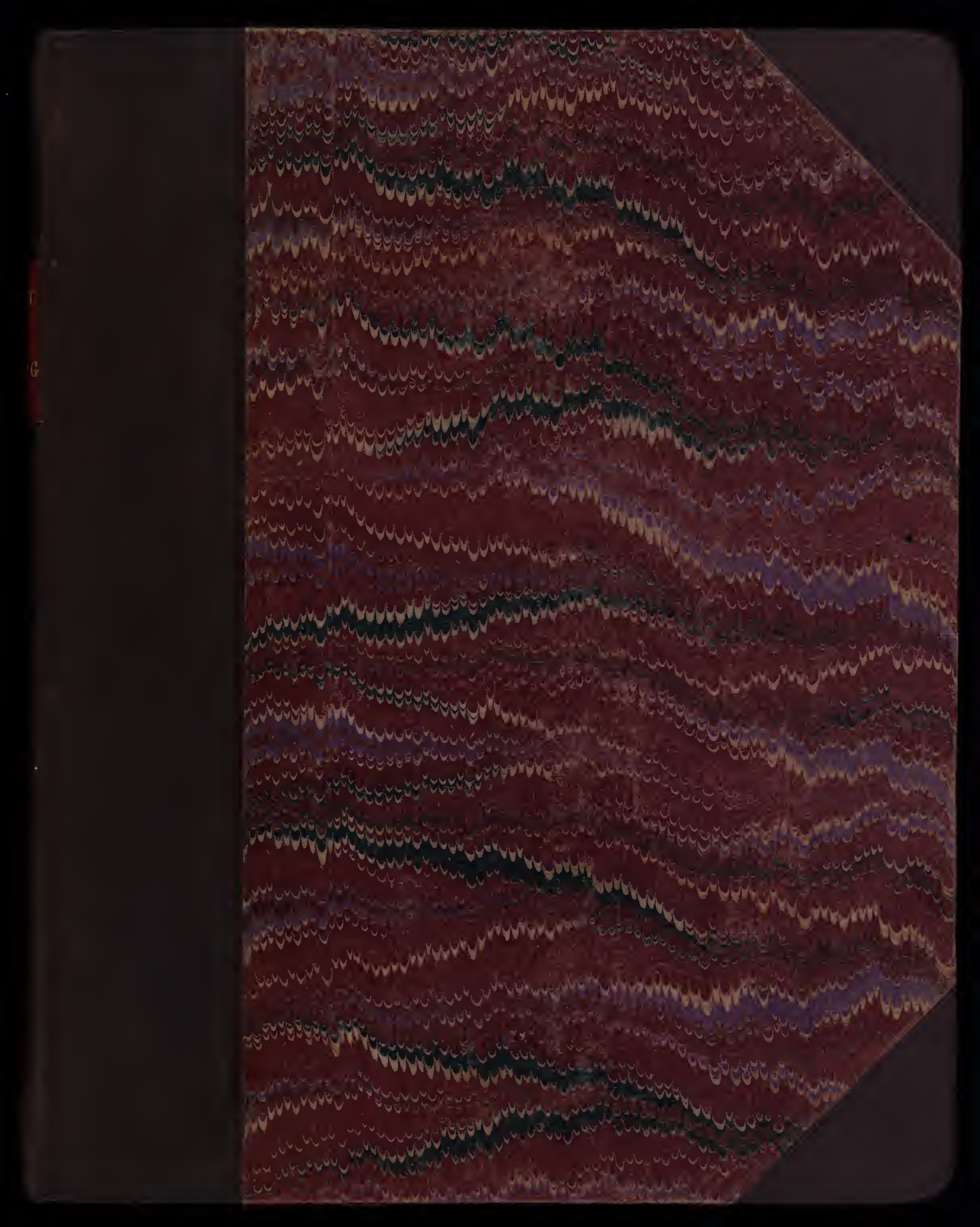

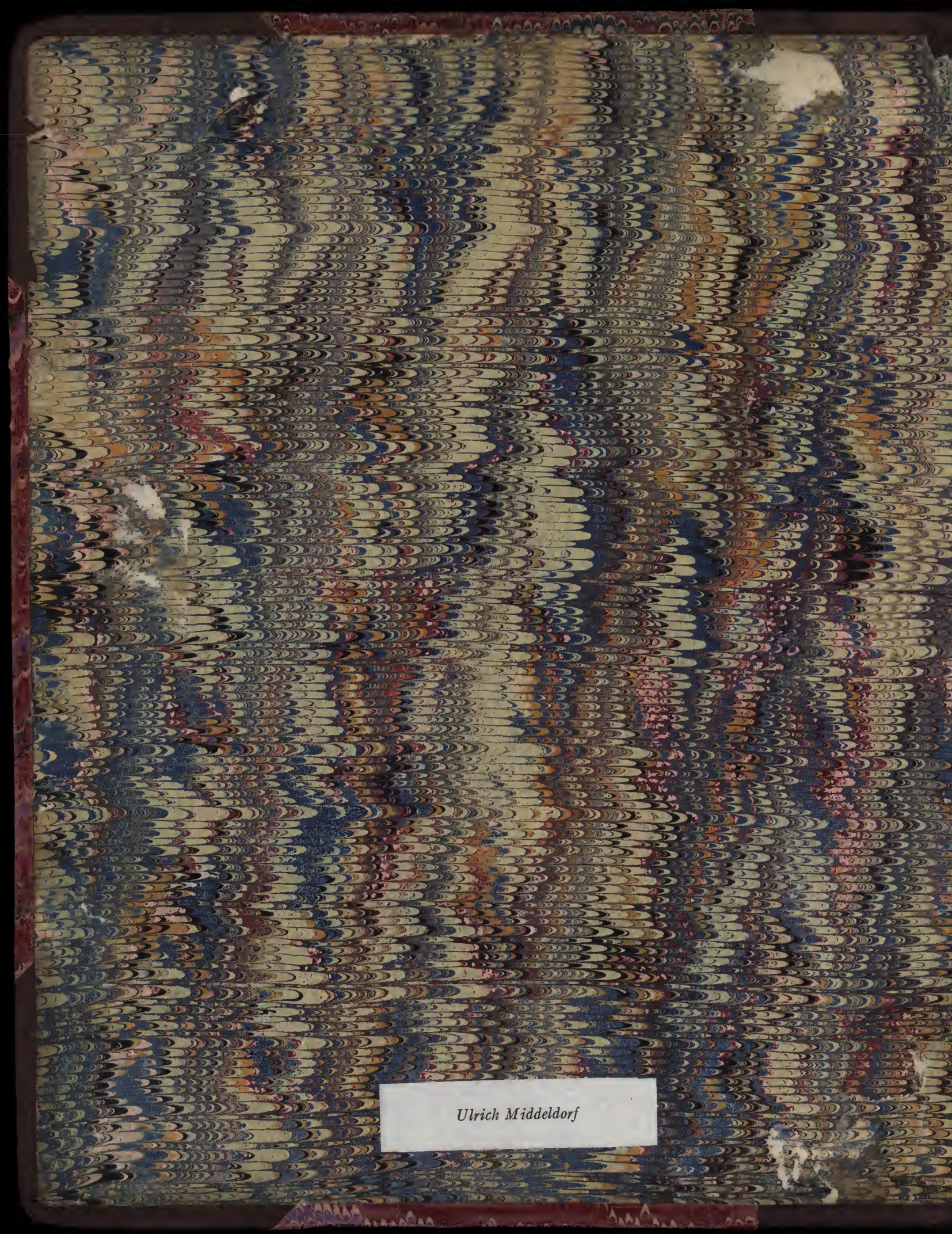
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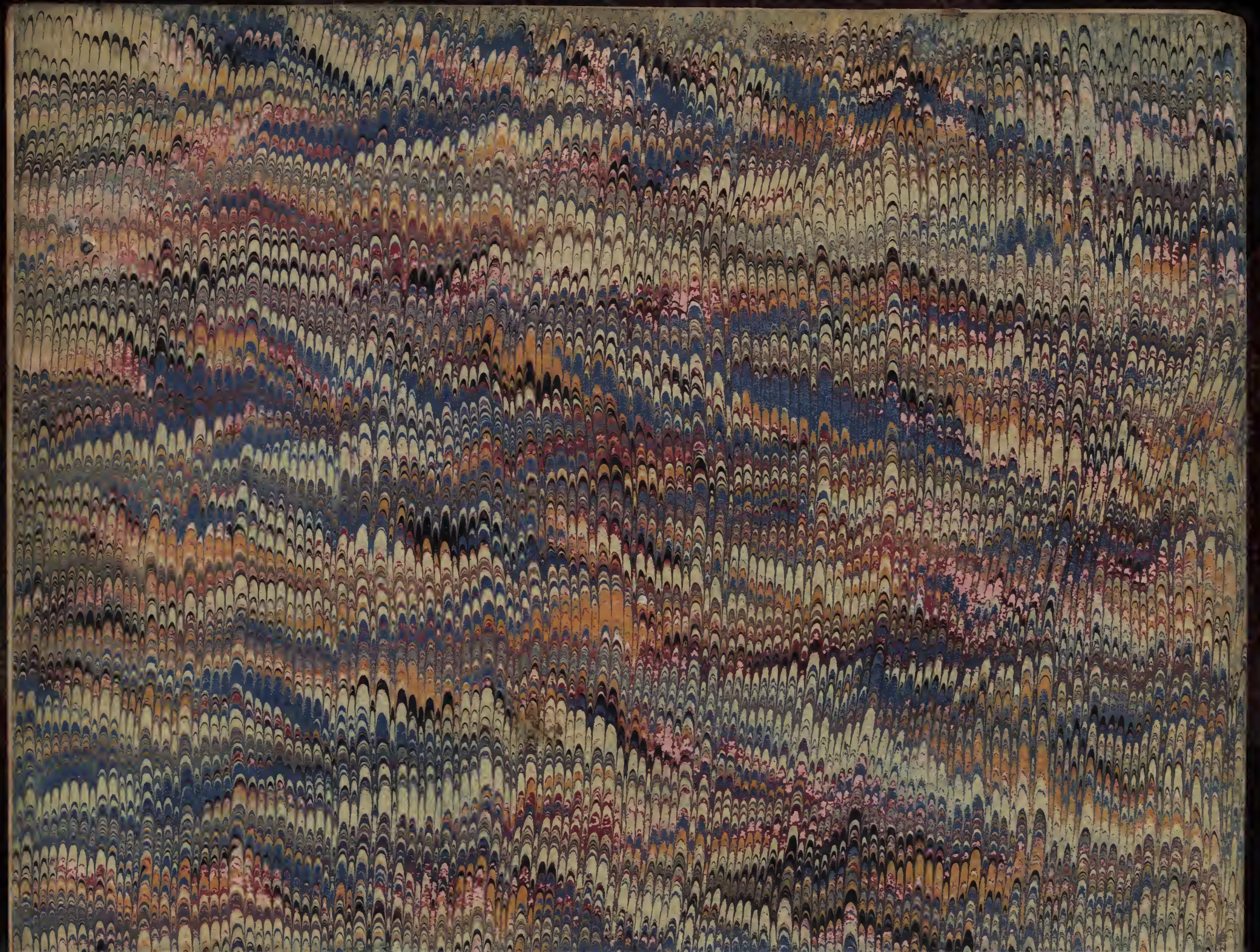

3 parts in 1 Vl

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A

PRACTICAL TREATISE ON PAINTING.

IN THREE PARTS.

C. and C. Whittingham, Chiswick.

TO

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE,

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

WHO NOT ONLY IN HIS OWN ADMIRABLE PRODUCTIONS

EXHIBITS THE BEST PRINCIPLES OF ART;

BUT WARMLY AND GENEROUSLY ENCOURAGES THE CULTIVATION OF THEM BY OTHERS;

FOSTERING IN THE MOST LIBERAL MANNER EVERY EFFORT

CALCULATED TO CONTRIBUTE TO SO DESIRABLE AN OBJECT;

This Work

IS DEDICATED, AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF RESPECT, BY

THE AUTHOR.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

COMPOSITION IN PAINTING.

A

PRACTICAL TREATISE

ON

PAINTING.

IN THREE PARTS.

CONSISTING OF

HINTS ON COMPOSITION, CHIAROSCURO, AND COLOURING.

THE WHOLE ILLUSTRATED BY

Examples from the Italian, Venetian, Flemish, and Dutch Schools.

BY JOHN BURNET.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETOR,

AND SOLD BY JAMES CARPENTER AND SON,

OLD BOND STREET.

1828.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

COMPOSITION IN PAINTING.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Examples from the Great Masters

OF THE

ITALIAN, FLEMISH, AND DUTCH SCHOOLS.

BY JOHN BURNET.

"Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but, if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent, as, by reading the thoughts of others, we learn to think."—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

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1828.

C. and C. Whittingham, Chiswick.

PREFACE.

THE Plates hereto annexed were originally intended to illustrate the first part of a Practical Essay on Painting, which I have long had in contemplation to publish; but have delayed, from year to year, from its interruption to my professional engagements, from doubts respecting its utility, and a love of ease which, after the day's employment, suggests a more natural recreation than the investigation of an abstruse study: I now publish the plates with a few loose hints thrown together, in the hope of their being useful. Should they be thought of advantage to the younger students of painting, in directing their minds to a regular mode of investigating the intricacies of the art, I shall follow them with others illustrative, in the first instance, of light and shade, and, ultimately, of the arrangement of colour. On the contrary, should the work not be considered a desideratum, by publishing only a first part, I escape a heavy responsibility and expense—a tax to which I do not wish that either my vanity or my love for the fine arts should subject me.

March 25, 1822.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

COMPOSITION IN PAINTING.

COMPOSITION.

Composition is the art of arranging figures or objects, so as to adapt them to any particular subject. In composition four requisites are necessary; —that the story be well told; that it possess a good general form; that it be so arranged as to be capable of receiving a proper effect of light and shade; and that it be susceptible of an agreeable disposition in colour. *The form* of a composition is best suggested by the subject or design, as the fitness of the adaptation ought to appear to emanate from the circumstances themselves: hence the variety of compositions.

The point of time being fixed upon, the action, expression, and incidental circumstances oblige us often to determine on a particular arrangement, that we may be enabled to place the most interesting objects in the most prominent places. Unless our attention be directed to such arrangement in the first instance, we shall often be obliged to put an emphasis on an insignificant object, or throw into repose an interesting point of the action, when we come to consider their relation to a good effect of light and shade.

To secure a good general form in composition, it is necessary that it should be as simple as possible. A confused complicated form may hide the art, but can never invite the attention. Horace, in his Art of Poetry, inculcates the same doctrine, "Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum." Whether this is to be produced by a breadth of light and shade, which is often the case with Rembrandt, even on a most complicated outline, or by the simple arrangement of colour, as we often find in Titian, or by the construction of the group in the first instance, evident in many of Raffaelle's works, must depend upon the taste of the artist: it is sufficient to direct the younger students to this particular, their minds being generally carried away by notions of variety and contrast.

In giving a few examples of composition, I have confined myself to the four simple and principal forms; not only from their being most palpable, but also from their possessing a decided character, which is at all times desirable. To those who imagine that such rules tend to fetter genius, I shall merely quote Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose works, if properly understood, render all other writings on the subject of painting superfluous. "It must, of necessity, be, that even works of genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules, by which men of extraordinary parts and such as are called men of genius work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilful in that mode of communicating ideas. Unsubstantial, however, as these rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty as if they were embodied, as I may say, upon paper. It is true, these refined principles cannot be always made palpable, like the more gross rules of art; yet it does not follow, but that the mind may be put in such a train that it

shall perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that propriety which words, particularly words of unpractised writers such as we are, can but very feebly suggest." *Sixth Discourse.*

To assist in putting the mind in such a train is all that these examples aim at; and to render apparent to the young artist what he will find wrapped up in theoretical disquisition.

The specimens here given merely happened to be in my possession: there are many others that will serve the student, perhaps better, for illustration, which he ought by all means to procure, or make sketches of; as it is only by rendering himself master of the subject, that he can hope to avoid the commonplace effects which swim upon the surface, and, being palpable, are adopted by every one whose judgment cannot carry him into the intricacies of the art.

Concealing the art is one of its greatest beauties; and he best can accomplish that who can discover it under all its disguises. I ought, however, to caution the young artist on this head, not to be too fastidious in trying to conceal what can be obvious only to a small number; for, in endeavouring to render his design more intricate, he may destroy character, simplicity, and breadth; qualities which affect and are appreciated by every one.

ANGULAR COMPOSITION.

Explanation of Plate I.

Fig. 1. In commencing a composition, it is customary to mark the middle of the space, for the purpose of arranging those points we consider of most importance to the subject; dividing the picture for the regulation of the masses of light and shade, of ascertaining and fixing the horizontal line, &c. This mode of constructing the composition is often suggested from the perspective effect requiring a length of line, thereby obliging us to place the point of sight at one side of the picture: sometimes from the group requiring a large space; which a diagonal line secures, as in the elevation of the Cross by Rubens, or from the conduct of light, as in his picture of the Descent from the Cross, &c.

Cuyp, in adopting this mode of composition in most of his pictures (which are generally Sunset or Sunrise), places the focus of light at the bottom of the sky, thereby enabling the distant part of the landscape to melt into it by the most natural means; while the strongest part of his sky, being at the opposite angle, produces the greatest expanse, and mixes and harmonizes with the dark side of the picture. Thus the eye is carried round the composition, until the two extremes are brought in contact, the most prominent with the most retiring.

In compositions constructed on this principle (particularly where the landscape occupies a large portion), many artists carry the lines of the clouds in a contrary direction, to counteract the appearance of all the lines

Plate I.

Angular Composition.

Fig. 1.

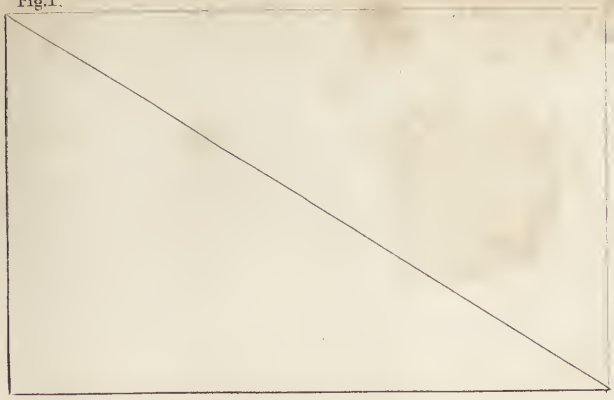

Fig. 2.

Cuyp

Fig. 3.

P. Potter.

Fig. 4.

P. Potter

Fig. 5.

A. Ostade.

Fig. 6.

Claude

John Burnet Sc.

London, Published by W. H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

running to one point. Thus using the darks of the clouds, &c. *to antagonize,* as it is termed, may apparently produce a better equipoise, but sacrifices many advantages; for we observe in many of the pictures of Cuyp, Rubens, and Teniers, where the figures, landscape, and sky are all on the same side of the composition, that a rich and soft effect is produced; the strong light and dark touches of the figures telling with great force against a background of houses, trees, &c. which are prevented from being harsh and cutting, by mixing their edges with the clouds, or dark blue of the sky. This doubling of the lines, (if I may so express it) gives a picture that rich fulness which we often perceive in a first sketch, from its possessing several outlines. Those who imagine that, by thus throwing the whole composition on one side, a want of union will be produced, will be convinced of their error by perceiving how small an object restores the balance; since, by its being detached and opposed to the most distant part, it receives a tenfold consequence.

Plate I. fig. 3 *and* 4. In these compositions Potter has made use of the sky as a background, by which mode the high lights of his group have more value, and it is rendered less harsh and cutting; which is the case with his famous picture of the Bull, the figures in which are brought up against the light side of the sky. If deception and strong relief were all he aimed at, he has gained them both, though at the expense of some of the higher qualities of the art, " a melting and union," as Reynolds terms it, of the figures with the background. The art is now too far advanced to allow us to be gratified with violent contrast; and a *small portion* of the group coming firm off the ground, is found to be sufficient to give the appearance of natural solidity to the whole.

Fig. 5. The original of this sketch, a small etching by Ostade, ought to be in the possession of every artist, for its beautiful arrangement of light and shade, and the skilful way in which they are woven together. As I

ought to have noticed above, that the principal mass of light in out of door scenes (both in nature and the best masters) is generally placed in the sky, or upper part of the picture, I may here remark, that in interiors (especially such as are constructed upon this plan) it is generally reversed, the roof and background being reserved for a mass of shadow and repose. Ostade, in his compositions, displays such an ingenuity in their construction as to render his pictures an endless source of gratification and study to the artist. In some of his works, the art is so completely hid as to make it difficult to say, whether his background or figures were the first composed. We have not only objects intercepting each other in the most natural and picturesque manner, but the figures carried up against them; thus coming in contact with various forms, different in size, distance, and colour. This, when done with judgment, gives a rich and inartificial effect. On the contrary, in the pictures of Teniers, we often find a number of objects cast down in one corner, evidently for the mere purpose of being painted; which, however, from their situation, their picturesque arrangement, and the mechanical skill of the execution, acquire a force, natural sharpness, and beauty, that amply compensate for the ostentatious display of such excellencies. Tenier's backgrounds are also totally different from Ostade's principle; his figures being generally surrounded with blank spaces of shadow or half tint. When a story is to be told, that requires the spectator to be directed to the heads and hands for expression and action, this breadth is more allowable; but breadth, as Mr. Fuseli justly observes, ought never to have the appearance of "flatness or insipidity." It is observable that, in an exhibition where there are a number of objects to distract the attention, those pictures please us most on which the eye is allowed to rest, from their possessing a vacant space; but those very pictures uniformly look blank and unfurnished when hung up singly in a room.

Plate I. fig. 6. Claude, in many of his compositions, displays very

little address in bringing up his strong dark against the light. In him, it often looks like unaffected primitive simplicity; but it might not be so considered in an artist of the present day. When Claude introduces a figure for such purpose, or in order to give a retiring delicacy to his distance, we often find it of a strong dark blue, which serves also to bring down the same colour from the opposite angle of the sky, thereby producing a union between both sides of the picture.

Plate II. fig. 1. As this is merely a further illustration of the principle noticed in Plate I., I can only refer to the remarks contained in the explanation of that plate. I may here, however, point out the length of line produced by the cattle, goats, &c. as it assists the perspective effect in conveying the eye into the picture, serving also as a base line for the landscape to rest upon. When the sun is placed near the point of sight, we sometimes see shadows made use of for the same purpose. A straight line is often necessary also for the sake of variety; and when architecture is not present, we must get it how and where we can.

Fig. 2. Rubens in this landscape has carried the lines of the clouds, trees, and ground, all in the same direction; and, from his placing the sun near the point of sight, even his shadows take the same course. When the most prominent or strong dark of the foreground is detached from the side of the picture, it has not only a less formal appearance, but acquires a force from its being cut out on both sides by light; as we shall find when we come to treat of Chiaroscuro. The lights also acquire a force and brilliancy from their being surrounded with dark, and the extent of the distance and continuity of the line are not altogether interrupted.

Fig. 3. In this subject, "Huntsman going out in the Morning," we have the principal group of a complete form in itself, yet forming a part of a whole, in consequence of its being carried round by the

two dogs in the foreground, and connected by the principal dog in the other group turning round to the noise. As it is a doubt in the minds of some artists, how far it is agreeable to the rules of composition to admit a figure complete in itself as a portion of a group, I shall only observe here, that, as far as form is concerned, their objection cannot apply; and as to individual parts, we see not only heads and hands complete as to form and light and shade; but we find that even an eye is capable of possessing all the characteristic beauties of the art. In fact, this application of it in the abstract, as well as in the aggregate, pervades every thing.

An object must not only appear to possess those properties adapted by nature for its purpose and protection, but also those qualities which have been found by the experience of the best masters productive of beauty: this renders it a source of gratification; and it is then said to be true to nature and art. For example, if we examine an eye turned from the light, we perceive a breadth of chiaroscuro; the white, or cornea, producing a mass of light, the iris and pupil a mass of shade. We find each of these focused, and a small portion of the strong dark and strong light brought in contact; and the light passing through the iris gives it its transparency, and serves instead of reflected light to clear up the shadow: the watery fluid, in the bottom of the eye and on the under eyelid, gives us that portion of minute finish necessary in all works of art, to which even the protecting hairs contribute. We have here a picture complete in itself; but if we carry our examination to the surrounding lines in the orbit, we perceive an harmonious communication and extension of its form, lights, and darks, by which its harshness is softened and diffused, and it becomes a part of the composition of the whole countenance.

Plate II. fig. 4. I have given a gradual advancement of the most prominent and dark part of a composition, until, in this example, we

Angular Composition

Fig 1.

Claude.

Fig 2.

Rembrandt

Fig 3.

P. De Laer.

Fig 4.

Canaletto.

London, Published by W H. Carpenter Lower Brook Street. June 1st 1822

John Burnet

have the strongest point brought into the centre. In the original, "The Embarkation of the Prince of Orange," the two principal figures are dressed in strong red, and strong black, and are the most cutting part of the group; and, from their being brought into the centre and against the most retiring part, and surrounded by light, Cuyp has rendered them of the greatest importance, though occupying only a very small portion of the picture.

ANGULAR COMPOSITION.

Plate III. fig. 1. The plan of composition I have here taken up is in the form of a diamond; which we find often adopted, either as a complete group, or as forming part of a more complicated arrangement. In commencing a composition, I have mentioned, "that it is of importance to mark in those points most necessary to our purpose." For example, when a story is to be told, the heads and hands, the seats of action and expression, are often referred to each other for the completion of form or extension of light; as by such means the eye of the spectator is led to the commencement and operation of the incident. After arranging the principal points, what are called the "secondary" require the greatest consideration; whether for the repetition of the lines, extension of the form, or conduct of the light and shade. Sometimes we are actuated by our requiring a second or third group for the better illustration of the story, which naturally leads us in the direction that affords us the greatest space; sometimes by the principal group demanding a considerable portion of the ground for a mass of shadow, beyond which a strong point is required, as a link of communication between the figures and the background. By making this point the strongest of a secondary group of objects, either from its size, lights, or darks, the eye is carried into the most remote circumstances, which become a part of the whole, from the principal group being made to depend upon *such point* for the completion of its form, the extension of the light, or the repetition of colour.

Fig. 2. In designs constructed upon this plan (especially of the Dutch School), we generally find the lower part of the form strongly pronounced, either by colour, or by light upon a dark ground, or vice versa: this gives the group a firm foundation, and also enables the artist to keep the other

Angular Composition

Fig 1.

Fig 2.

A. Ostade.

Fig 3

J. Burnet.

Fig 4.

Teniers.

Fig 5.

P. De Laer.

Fig 6.

Metzu.

Fig 7

Rembrandt.

J. Jon. Burnet & Co

London, Published by W. H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

objects in their proper situations as to distance from the eye. I wish particularly to direct the student's attention to this particular, as a doctrine, founded upon the rays of vision, has been attempted to be established, viz. that objects as they recede from the centre of the picture, either to the sides or bottom, ought to be deprived of part of their force of light and shade and colour. This is neither nature nor art. If the subject requires those objects to be kept subordinate, true art does not deprive them of their natural force, by robbing them of their lights, darks, or colours: it renders them less obtrusive by the ground which surrounds them, or substitutes other objects of a less attractive quality.

Plate III. fig. 3. By making the circumstance from which the story springs a strong point (either from situation, force, or colour), and surrounding it with those objects more immediately connected, and most illustrative of its effects, the picture explains itself at a glance; which is one of the strong distinctions of painting from poetry,—the one proceeding in a circuitous route to hide the denouement, and keep hold of the attention, the other proclaiming instantaneously the beginning and end of the story. I do not mean that the circumstance ought always to occupy the centre, any more than that the hero should always occupy the centre; but as it is of use to explain the cause of his action and expression, it has, in my mind, a prior claim to consideration.

Plate III. fig. 4 *and* 6. *Plate IV. fig.* 5. We have the strongest light coming in contact with the strong dark in the most cutting manner, in the knee and leg of the falling figure, the arm of the man writing, and in the head of the infant Christ. When this can be done without interfering with the breadth of light, it is of the greatest consequence, both on account of its giving a thickness or rotundity to the group, and also because it enables us to keep the most projecting points and the most retiring in their proper places by analogy to one another. I am aware

that the management of light and shade often requires a sacrifice of this principle; where we can accomplish our object without such a sacrifice it has always the most natural appearance. Many accidental combinations and beautiful effects of nature arise, not merely from their possessing a good general form and a pictorial arrangement of light and shade, but also from the most projecting points being often assisted by a combination of a harsh cutting line, strong dark and light, or opposition of local colour, and hence they strike the artist as being applicable to painting; these being the means he finds frequently adopted by the best masters. It is only under such favourable circumstances, that the artist can enter the lists with nature; and, having but a flat surface to work upon, he is warranted in availing himself of every assistance science can afford. In arranging objects scientifically, to give them at the same time the appearance of natural accident, is one of the perfections of the art.

As the best practical hints are derived from accidental combinations in nature, whose sudden changes prevent the possibility of sketching, the mind ought to be trained to the most regular and even mechanical mode of arranging the ideas; that in an instant we may be able to determine whether the effects, which we perceive, depend upon a particular form, upon particular arrangement of the light and shade, or upon the manner in which the hot and cold colours are brought in contact. By thus tracing effects to their proper causes, we secure the principal points as a sort of short hand notes to guide and assist the memory. This practice will also open a road of communication between the eye and the operations of the mind, which neither a hasty sketch nor the most learned dissertation can, separately, produce. At first it may seem more difficult than it really is; but a few trials will convince the student of its practicability, especially as the effects that strike him to be the most pictorial are generally the most simple.

Plate III. fig. 4. The cards lying on the ground, in this subject, indicate

the cause of the quarrel; and the figure entering from an adjoining apartment gives us a hint of the noise generally attending such brawls. As a moral is here introduced, I shall make a few remarks (otherwise irrelevant to the purpose) in this place. When a picture possesses a moral, it is certainly a great advantage, provided we are not disgusted by its vulgarity, as is the case in the representations of drunkenness, &c. in some of the Dutch school, or by affected sentiment, as in many of the present works of all the schools. The moral must also never injure the picture in its higher requisites. In the early ages, representations of vice were necessary as strong lessons of morality; but as mankind grew more enlightened, they were referred to books, not pictures, for improvement. Besides, an artist ought always to recollect, that he paints for the higher, not for the lower classes of men; and as his business is to convey pleasure, not pain, a little intercourse with society will convince him, that men in all ranks have often enough to vex them, or to produce a variance with their fellow creatures, without hanging up on their walls representations tending to increase either the one or the other feeling. The absence of these considerations in an artist (of which we see daily proofs) dooms his works to that neglect which he ascribes to the want of encouragement to the arts generally. Representations of tragical events also (though possessing a fine moral or sentiment) have received but little patronage in this country; whether it is that they are not suited to the character of the nation, who, though not averse to the representation of a tragedy on the stage, are unwilling to choose a constant companion from such a class, or that there are few of those connoisseurs whose feelings are completely absorbed in the contemplation of high art, is a question which this is not the proper place to discuss: the fact is, however, indisputable.

Plate III. fig. 6. As this composition consists of a single figure, I shall notice here the method Metzu has taken to render it a part of the whole, especially as we shall have to refer to other plates, when we come to treat of light and shade, and colour. The figure is dressed in black and

white, coming in contact and contrast in the strongest manner; the black is repeated by the hat, and diffused by the black marble in the floor, the white is referred to the white marble in the floor and collected into a mass by the white wall; the carpet which is of red and warm colours, focused at the light by a stick of wax, is repeated by the back of the chair, and carried up by the outside of the window on the edge of the picture, which is painted of a pale red; the forms are echoed and repeated with the same simplicity, and the picture frame on the wall, from being smaller than the frame of the window, serves at the same time to assist the perspective effect: even the fastening of the casement is not without its use in the composition. In thus obliging a design to depend on its ground for support, consists the principle of union and harmony; but, as I have at present only to draw the student's attention to the arrangement of form and that portion of composition that arises from the repetition and connection of lines, I shall notice one good plan amongst many others, which is, to mark in strongly those points in the ground which of necessity must be introduced from natural circumstances, at the same time contriving the group so that those points become of the greatest consequence to the composition. This often gives a characteristic stamp of nature to the whole.

Plate III. fig. 7. We have here the strong dark point coming in contact with the light ground in the most cutting manner; which is more naturally accounted for by its being the most projecting; as it is the inside of an empty drinking cup, it perhaps indicates the commencement of the story as well as any other means.

Plate IV. fig. 1. As an outline can give us little idea of this arrangement, I may be allowed to observe, that the four points of light are the upper halves of both the figures (being of a pale yellow), the white dog and a light wall above the fireplace brought in contact with a black powder horn.

Plate 4.

Angular Composition.

Fig.1.

Terburg.

Fig.2.

A. Ostade.

Fig.3.

P. De Laer

Fig.4.

Reubens.

Fig.5.

Correggio

John Burnet sc.

London, Published by W. H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1832

Plate IV. fig. 2. Ostade's pictures have the peculiarly valuable property of looking well at a distance, thereby attracting the attention of the spectator towards them. When we come nigh to examine, we find that this is produced by their possessing a decided mass of light, obtained by means of a light wall, sky, &c. His heads and hands form a number of luminous spots in a mass of half tint, and are rendered of more value by the introduction of blue and dark draperies; this requires much consideration, in order that those spots may take agreeable and decided forms to prevent confusion. In Ostade's works it is rendered the more easy, as he has seldom any particular story to interfere with the arrangement. His pictures call to my mind a passage in Hervey, which appears like the language of a painter, so completely consonant is it to the principles on which he constructs his work. Speaking of the stars, Hervey says, " on a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies, they appear like an illustrious chaos, a promiscuous heap of shining globes, neither ranked in order nor moving by line; but what seems confusion is all regularity; what carries a show of negligence is really the result of the most masterly contrivance."

Fig. 3. P. De Laer, from his long residence amongst the Italian painters, has constructed most of his pictures, though generally in the low walks of art, on the most regular and severe principles of their grandest compositions. As this regularity is considered by some to be incompatible with the negligence of arrangement which they suppose necessary to the picturesque, I shall here make a few observations on that doctrine. I consider it to be false, and not tenable, when referred to the operations of nature; for we find her conducting and exhibiting the most beautiful appearances and effects in the humblest and most trifling of her works, by the same laws that regulate her in the formation of the most sublime. Abernethy says, " that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is complicated in its parts, yet simple in its operations, where a variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle

operating uniformly." When we refer to the great masters in poetry, we find that the Idyls of Theocritus are not less regular than the Iliad of Homer; or the Georgics and Eclogues of Virgil than the Eneid. The English pastorals have failed in giving pleasure, not by the regularity of their construction, but in consequence of their not being founded on truth; the language and scenery not being that of nature in such situations.

Let me here caution the student against supposing that I mean grossness and vulgarity as proper accompaniments in his representations of common nature; he must convey such scenes to us with the appearance of their having passed through a susceptible and amiable mind, anxious to render nature agreeable, not to make her disgusting.

In the works of the best painters in the lower walks of the art, there are numberless examples of this regularity. Even Wouvermans, whose soft and delicate touch seems ill suited to severe regularity of form, or light and shade, has received an advantage by its adoption; his best pictures being founded on the simple construction of his rival. A regular form can always be rendered sufficiently irregular by the means of light and shade; and if P. De Laer's pictures possess this property of light and shade too decidedly for such a purpose, we must recollect that from his painting upon a dark red ground (as was used at the time by many of the Italians) his works often look harsh; the lights, from being thickly painted, having resisted the influence of the ground, while his half tints are absorbed and indented in the shadow.

As the student will have occasion to refer to the prints after the different designs here given, I beg leave to remark, that, in most of the Italian prints which I compared with the original pictures, I found the characteristic points often not attended to. The strong light wanted their value, either from the shadows being deficient in their proper strength and quietness, or from the introduction of aërial perspective (a circumstance

seldom influencing the conduct of the great masters either of the Italian or Venetian schools), or from the manner in which the strong darks and lights were brought in contact. I believe sufficient has already been written on engraving, nor am I against its being considered a liberal translation; the beauty of lines is, perhaps, the only substitute engravers can give for the absence of colours; but surely it is not too much to request, that a strong red, or a strong blue (however ornamented by lines), be referred to its proper scale, either as the extension of light, or the production of shadow. These errors seem to have arisen from contemplating the picture in the twilight, for the more easy detection of the light and shade; a most fallacious method; for, in such case, the most projecting and the most retiring colours are rendered similar.

Plate IV. fig. 5. As in figure 2, we may observe this form influencing the arrangement of the whole group; we have here the heads composed on the same principle, and repeating each other with a simplicity which is safe only in the hands of the best painters. I have mentioned regularity as a quality to be found in the most sublime subjects in painting; but to infer from that, that regularity constituted sublimity, were as absurd as to say, irregularity constituted the picturesque.

CIRCULAR COMPOSITION.

We come now to speak of the circular form of composition, which is applicable to the highest walks of art from its simplicity and extensive sweep; and to the lowest, from its being finely adapted for the purposes of light and shade.

Plate V. fig. 1. In this Cartoon we have a fine specimen of this form of composition. In the design, a strict adherence to the plan laid down has secured a decided character to the picture. With Raffaelle this seems to have been invariably of the first importance; his worst compositions have always a strong feature to recommend them. In this design we have the figures gradually declining from the sides to the centre of the circle on the foreground, which enables the spectator to view the whole of the persons employed: to assist which arrangement, Raffaelle has placed the Apostles on an elevated plane; and, by placing the principal in the centre, has enabled them to acquire that consequence their diminution would otherwise have deprived them of. The regularity of the composition is also increased by the division of the group into seven figures on each side, and no one, except Ananias and Sapphira, performs an action that is not repeated. Thus simply has Raffaelle contrived not only to tell his story, but also those circumstances which preceded and followed it. This regularity will strike the student as being particularly suited to religious subjects; but a few attempts, to make such uniformity appear a natural emanation, will compel him to exclaim with the poet,

"Within that circle none durst walk but he."

Plate 5.

Circular Composition.

Fig 1.

Raffaelle.

Fig 2.

Correjio.

Fig 3

Guido.

John Burnet &c

London, Published by W. H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 7th 1822.

As I shall have occasion to speak of the repetition of form, as being no less essential towards the production of harmony than the repetition of colour, I may call the student's attention to it in this place. In compositions embracing many figures, a repetition of form and action is often found to be indispensable; a single figure, in such case, being found too small to give importance to any action, is referred to the next for assistance; as, in colouring, one colour is often made to depend upon the adjoining for its shadow or enlargement. But, independently of its acquiring a consequence by such extension, harmony requires, that a strong action should be as it were broken down and diffused through the group. In writing, this is generally the case, and the reader is prepared for one sentence by what has preceded it. This simplicity and harmonious communication is to be found in nature, in the antique, in the best Italian masters, and in many of the Dutch, particularly Ostade. It is seldom to be met with in the French school, which is fond of sudden contrast, and insulated action, light, and colour.

Plate V. fig. 2. In compositions of out-of-door scenes, this circular form of arrangement is often the only opportunity we have of procuring a mass of shade so necessary to the group in a pictorial point of view. I am aware that some *sculptors* consider the arrangement of their figures degraded by any attention to the picturesque effect of light and shade, which to *painters* seems more extraordinary, as sculptors have not the means of local colour to produce it. With sculpture, however, it is not our province to interfere; I shall only observe that such reasoning never seems to have influenced Coreggio. The most picturesque arrangements in form, and in light and shade, are to be found in his grandest compositions. We have here six heads placed in the most unequal manner, numerically speaking; the shadow is increased by the dark blue dress of the Virgin, and the two most projecting points by the light drapery of the Magdalen and the strong red of St. Jerome; yet this picture is not less sublime than that of "the Doctors of the Church" (*Fig.* 3), where the six heads are placed in the most

regular manner; four round the altar, and one at each side, for the purpose of connecting the lower and upper half of the picture; the consultation of the doctors, and the vision expressive of the subject of their research. The prominent points in this work are the same as in *fig.* 2, the figure with the book being in a strong red, and the other in white.

Plate VI. fig 1. In this subject Rubens displays all the easy fluency of a great master, who would consider such a design only as an amusement. The manner in which the figures are interwoven with each other, the mode resorted to, to assist the projecting and retiring points, and the velocity with which the whole appears to move, are all worthy of the artist's attention.

Fig. 2. The student may compare this admirable design of West's, "The Death of General Wolfe," with figure 4. "The Death of St Jerome:" as Dominichino has adopted the same means to produce his mass of shadow in the middle of the group, and to bring it in contact with the light on the principal figure.

Fig. 3. As I shall have occasion to refer to the examples of this great master of light and shade in their proper place, it would be unfair to make any observations on him here, where he appears, as Milton would express it, "shorn of his beams." I may, however, remark, that, from his making use of mean materials, he often destroys the beauty of that structure which the splendour of its light is so well calculated to adorn.

Fig. 5. As the merits of this composition have been descanted on by every critic,—being a subject well suited for a display of the powers of eloquence,—I shall merely offer one or two practical remarks. Raffaelle has made the principal figure of the lower group (an interesting young female) detach itself from the ground by a strong warm light cutting against the shadow, and by a dark blue mantle coming in contact with the

Circular Compositions

Plate 6

Fig 1.

Rembrandt.

Fig 2.

B West.

Fig 3.

Rembrandt.

Fig 4. Domenichino.

Fig 5. Rathaile.

John Burnet Sc.

London Published by W H Carpenter Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

Plate 7.

Fig.1.

La Fralle.

Fig.2.

Rembrandt.

John Burnet fc.

London Published by W.H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

light; by her addressing the Apostles and pointing to the demoniac, the two sides are united, and the figures are so linked together that the eye is carried round until we arrive at the most projecting points, the hands and feet of the Apostle with the book. The Disciples express their inability to perform the cure; and, by two of them pointing to the mount, refer the people to Christ, who has retired thither to pray. This is the arrangement, but it was not alone by the expression or arrangement of his figures that Raffaelle holds his rank in the art; it was also by the bold and original conception of his subject. He has here displayed the vision of the Transfiguration in the most sublime manner, and by raising his figures from the ground (one of those movements of the mind which are above restraint, has stamped them with the strong feature of immortal beings. Mr. Fuseli luminously describes them rising like "a flame:" if not too metaphorical) he might have said, "like a bright flame issuing as if from a sacrifice, and ascending unto God."

Plate VII. It is not only necessary that a group should have hollows for the reception of shadow, but also projections for the light to rest upon; it not only ought to possess a good general form in the outline which defines it, but the figures must also be linked together in such a way as to lead the spectator in amongst them. They must appear to have room to stand upon, and every figure must keep his place in its relative distance from the eye; hence a form composed of a concave and convex line has been often adopted as the simplest and best, and possessing the greatest variety of advantages. That it is so generally used will cease to surprise us, when we find it applicable both to the regularity of Raffaelle and the irregularity of Rembrandt.

Plate VIII. fig. 1. In this design, "The Landing of Charles II," West has placed the principal figure in the middle of the picture. Commencing his composition at the nighest point, he carries on his group until it ends in the distance. Neither in the situation of the hero, nor in the form of the group, does he seem solicitous to hide the science. He has brought the nigh point in contact with the shadow, and strengthened it by the female whom the boy accompanies, being dressed in strong dark: when this is brought sharp off the ground, as is the case also in *fig.* 2, it enables us to keep the other figures in their places better than by diminishing the firmness of their shadows or colours.

Fig. 2. "Cattle returning Home in a Shower." In this composition the principal light falls on the convex part of the group, and the depth of the shadow is assisted by the local colour of the objects placed in it. The goat in the foreground is connected to the rest by some white flowers of an elder bush, which cannot be expressed in an outline. As this is from a design of my late brother's, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing the great loss I feel in not having his assistance, not only in these notes, but in every thing connected with the art: though practising painting but for a short time of a short life, his strength of mind, his fine eye for colour, and a taste for the beauties of pastoral painting, convince me the English School has lost one that would have been an ornament to that department of the science.

Fig. 3. Is a repetition of the same form.

Plate IX. This plate consists of Wilkie's admirable composition of the Blind Fiddler, the Salutation of the Virgin by Rembrandt, and a Dance by Ostade. I shall leave it to the student's own judgment to investigate the various forms on which these compositions depend.

By making the principal heads depend upon one mode of arrangement,

Plate 8.

Fig 1.

B. West.

Fig 2.

J.n. Burnet.

Fig 3.

Jn. Burnet

John Burnet sc.

n Published by W.H. Carpenter Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

the general appearance of the group on a different mode, the background on a third, and so on with the minor points (provided they all tend to the assistance of one another), his composition will not only have intricacy without confusion, but that variety which is so characteristic in nature. A beautiful combination in nature will often appear to evade every rule, by her being perfect in every mode of examination. All her varieties emanate from a straight line and a curve. A judicious arrangement of objects possessing these various forms gives the strongest natural appearance to a picture; nor ought the artist to leave out rashly what he may conceive to be void of beauty. In colouring, harsh tints are admitted to produce harmony in the other colours; and the most picturesque arrangements often depend on the presence of what might be otherwise considered ugly forms.

As I have made use of the terms "beautiful and agreeable arrangements," it is proper to give an explanation of the sense in which they are applied. By a beautiful arrangement, I mean a proper adaptation of those principles that arrest a common observer, and give a pleasurable sensation, which to a cultivated mind increases (not diminishes) by the investigation of the cause which produces it. For example, a beautiful appearance in nature affects the savage and the philosopher from their sensations merely as men; but a painter, whose life is spent in a constant competition with nature in producing the same effects, receives a tenfold gratification in following her through those assemblages which to the world beside are, as it were, "a fountain sealed and a book shut up." Hence, in art, a beautiful arrangement must be a selection of those forms, lights, and colours that produce a similar result; and the taste of an artist is shown, in heightening their effect by the absence of those circumstances which are found by experience to produce the contrary. Did an investigation of the means pursued by the great masters tend to abridge an artist's pleasurable sensations, instead of being the most favoured, he would be rendered the most miserable of beings; but the

opposite is the case, as by such means he is taught an alphabet that enables him to understand the language of nature. It may be supposed that, in my search after so desirable an object, I have perused all the works written to define Beauty and Taste, and which endeavour to circumscribe with a line that endless variety and omnipresence which make nature a source of gratification to all nations under every alteration of the mind; but as I wish to avoid all controversy on the subject, which we often find merely renders the most sublime truths more obscure, I shall only remark, that, as far as painting is concerned, the authors of many of these works have done an irreparable injury. Artists generally prefer the opinions of untutored children to the remarks of the most learned philosophers, whose advancement in other sciences really seems to increase their ignorance of this. If I have explained my definition of the terms sufficiently for the artist's comprehension, I am satisfied. To explain them to others would be equally impossible as that those others should be able to define them to us. The mind must have received its education through the medium of the eye, not of the ear, to enjoy the faculty of conceiving such ideas, or the power of tracing them to their original source in nature or in art, as a test of their truth.

Before I conclude, I have to apologize for the paucity and brevity of these observations, and beg the reader's constant reference to the plates as the only method of making myself correctly understood. Painting is a practical branch of philosophy, and can only be rendered clear by satisfying the observations of the eye, as well as the reflections of the mind: this, perhaps, is one reason why so much has been written on the subject without those truths being made sufficiently obvious, which the writers wished to demonstrate.

I have also been anxious to avoid tautology, as it will be necessary to go over, in a great measure, the same ground, when I come to treat of light, and shade, and colour; when many observations which appear to

Plate 9.

Fig 1.

D. Wilkie.

Fig 2.

Rembrandt.

Fig 3.

A. Ostade.

John Burnet fc.

London. Published by W. H. Carpenter, Lower Brook Street, June 1st 1822.

be omitted here will present themselves, from belonging more properly to those divisions of the work.

I must also caution the young artist against supposing that these modes of arrangement are given for his imitation; I merely wish him to be acquainted with the advantages any particular composition possesses, that in adopting any invention of his own, he may engraft upon it those or similar advantages. A design that has nothing but novelty to recommend it is a conceit, not a composition. The student in painting can hope to derive advantage from theory only, when rendered obvious by ocular demonstration. One great cause of the obscurity which envelopes the art is the criticism of those whose ideas on the subject are obscure;—to free *the world* from their influence is perhaps impossible; but the artist must free *himself*.

FINIS.

C. and C. Whittingham, Chiswick.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

LIGHT AND SHADE IN PAINTING.

C. and C. Whittingham, Chiswick.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

LIGHT AND SHADE IN PAINTING.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Examples from the Italian, Flemish, and Dutch Schools.

BY JOHN BURNET.

" The highest finishing is labour in vain, unless at the same time there be preserved a breadth of light and shadow."

REYNOLD'S NOTES ON DU FRESNOY.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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AND SOLD BY JAMES CARPENTER AND SON,

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PREFACE.

I AM now induced to take up the second part of the PRACTICAL HINTS ON PAINTING, from the encouragement the first has met with; but more especially from the approbation of many of our best painters, who are undoubtedly the best judges of the utility of the work. In this part, treating of the conduct of the light and shade, I shall follow the same mode as before, merely throwing out hints as they occur, without any relation to connexion, or a regular treatise. The mind is naturally fond of variety, and by leading it through a succession of images, provided their advantages are shown and explained, the end of instruction is accomplished. There is no fixed mode for conveying instruction; those things which appear to the reader to be useful, he will connect in his own mind by a chain of reasoning, shorter than the shortest which could be furnished by writing; and the longest

dissertation to prove the existence or utility of that which appears of no advantage would be unavailing.

I have endeavoured to trace the effects, as much as possible, to their first causes operating in various ways on the minds of the different artists who have adopted them. Whether they were guided by rules, or imitative instinct, we cannot now determine; nor is it my wish to inculcate any doctrine where the student has a better mode of his own to serve as a guide. Let him, however, always bear in mind, that in painting, as in other things, to use the words of Dr. Johnson, "The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them, but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay."

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PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

LIGHT AND SHADE IN PAINTING.

LIGHT AND SHADE.

Before proceeding to investigate light and shade in their various intricate situations, it may be proper to notice a few of the more palpable and self-evident combinations, and for the better comprehending of which, I shall divide them into five parts: *viz.* light, half light, middle tint, half dark, and dark. When a picture is chiefly composed of light and half light, the darks will have more force and point; but, without the help of strong colour to give it solidity, it will be apt to look feeble: and when a picture is composed mainly of dark and half dark, the lights will be more brilliant; but they will be apt to look spotty for want of half light to spread and connect them; and the piece be in danger of becoming black and heavy:

and when a picture is composed chiefly of middle tint, the dark and light portions have a more equal chance of coming into notice; but the general effect is in danger of being common and insipid.

Light and shade are capable of producing many results; but the three principal are relief, harmony, and breadth. By the first the Artist is enabled to give his works the distinctness and solidity of nature. The second is the result of a union and consent of one part with another; and the third, a general breadth, is the necessary attendant on extent and magnitude. A judicious management of these three properties is to be found in the best pictures of the Italian, Venetian, and Flemish Schools, and ought to employ the most attentive examination of the student; for by giving too much relief, he will produce a dry hard effect; by too much softness and blending of the parts, woolliness and insipidity; and in a desire to preserve a breadth of effect, he may produce flatness.

Relief is most necessary in large works; as their being seen from a greater distance than easel pictures prevents their looking harsh or cutting, and gives them that sharpness and clearness of effect so necessary to counteract heaviness. Not only the works of Raphael and those of the Italian school possess this quality, but we find it in the greatest perfection in the pictures of Paul Veronese and Tintoretto; and even the larger works of Titian and Corregio have a flatness and precision which we look for in vain in the succeeding school of Caracci and their disciples; Guido excepted.

Harmony, or a union of the different parts of a composition, depends upon the intermediate parts serving as a link or chain, either by conveying

a sensation of the same colours with those in immediate contact, or by neutralizing and breaking down the harsh asperities of the two extremes, and thus producing a connexion or agreement.

Breadth of effect is only to be produced by a great extent of light or shade pervading the picture. If an open daylight appearance is intended, such as we see in Cuyp, &c. it will be best produced by leaving out part of the middle tint, and allowing a greater spread of light and half light; this will also give the darks the relative force which they possess in nature. If a breadth of shadow is required, such as we find in Rembrandt, &c. the picture ought to be made up of middle tint and half dark. In the one treatment the darks ought to tell sharp and cutting, which is the characteristic of strong daylight; in the other the lights ought to appear powerful and brilliant, enveloped in masses of obscurity.

The influence of shadow upon any composition, when carried beyond the necessary depth for the relief or distinct marking of the several parts, is breadth, from its absorbing many of the half tints, and rendering the darks less cutting; and repose, from there being fewer of the outlines visible; hence arises a certain grandeur attendant upon space, and an agreeable sensation, from the spectator being allowed to exercise his own fancy in embodying indistinct forms. Thus the gloomy solitude of a wood is increased by the absence of the twittering light through the trees, the absence of their harsh colour, and the distinct form and crisp marking of the leaves. Rembrandt has carried this property of shadow beyond the hope of any improvement, and by this means has clothed the most trifling subject with a portion of sublimity. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by the association of ideas, it is capable of imparting a greater degree of

horror to any subject of terror; as imaginary dangers appear greater than real, being augmented by the operations of the mind. Milton has made use of this quality in describing the situation of the fallen Angels:

> "From those flames
> No light, but rather darkness visible
> Served only to discover sights of woe."

And Titian, in his picture of the Martyrdom of St. Laurence, which otherwise is disagreeable from its being cold and black.

Having thus defined some of the characteristic features of shadow, the effects of light in a great measure explain themselves, being in most instances of an opposite nature. Its cheerful influence operates on the mind of the spectator, either when viewing the festivities of a village holiday or when he beholds it diffused over the general face of nature: it may be termed the Allegro in Painting.

Explanation of Plate I. Fig. 1.

If light, collected into a focus by means of a lens, be thrown obliquely upon a wall, it will explain to us one of its principal properties, upon which many Artists have founded their principles of light and shade. Where the bundles of rays are collected, the light is increased in brightness; and when they become more diffused and spread out, it naturally becomes more feeble, losing itself in half tint. In this example we have some of the most essential qualities of light as applicable to the purposes of painting. We have a principal light, which, being produced by the

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

London Published July 1, 1826.

collecting of the rays, leaves that portion of the ground the darkest which comes in contact with it, thereby assisting its brightness. We have an innumerable variety of gradations, until the light is dissipated and lost. Some artists maintain, and justly, that every light, however small, ought to have a focus, or one part brighter than another; and as we find this to be a general law in nature, it is surely safe ground to go upon. For the same reason we ought to have one portion of a dark more decided than the rest. If these two extremes are brought in contact, we make them assist each other, one becoming brighter, and the other darker, from the effect of contrast. If they are placed at the opposite sides of the picture, we have greater breadth and a more equal balance. Let us now examine how these properties have been made use of in the management of the light and shade of a picture. If, for example, we take a head by Rembrandt, we find the principal light or focus in the upper part of the face (which he often, to render more luminous, surrounds with a black bonnet or hat, and even this he keeps of a cold tone, to give more value to the flesh); the light is then allowed to fall down on the figure, producing thereby a union and an appearance of his light giving out rays of the same hue as itself. If we follow him in the conduct of some of his larger compositions, we find the same principle adopted, whether they consist of many figures, such as the hundred Guilder print, or of few, as in the small Nativity in the National Gallery; thus rendering the most complicated compositions subservient to the simplest principles of light and shade. A few experiments on a ground of a middle tint, with a pencil filled with white, and another dipped in black, will give the student an insight into all the changes capable of being produced upon this principle.

Plate I. *Fig.* 2.

If a diagonal line be drawn through the picture, and the extreme dark and extreme light be placed at opposite sides, we must of necessity have the greatest breadth of effect. If a balance or union between the two sides be wished, there is no other way but by borrowing a portion of the one and exchanging it for a portion of the opposite; and not only may this practice be made use of for the harmony of the whole, but the light and the shade will be thus rendered more intense by the force of opposition. Now, whether the dark which is carried to the light side be very small, or very large, and, vice versa, we have the groundwork of some of the most powerful and most natural effects in painting. If the light is placed near the horizon, as in evening skies, for example, such as it frequently is in Cuyp, we see it rising upwards until lost in middle tint in the upper part of the picture, and the middle tint descending into shadow by means of trees, figures, &c. thus making a sweep round the picture, and thereby affording the greatest opportunity for breadth of effect. If the two extreme points are connected by intermediate figures, so as to form but one group, we have the greatest firmness, as the light part of the group will be relieved by a dark ground, and the dark part of the group by a light ground: if we pursue the contrary practice, and place the dark part of the group on the dark ground, and the light part of the group on the light ground, we have more breadth and softness of effect. There is no want of examples, either in nature or in pictures, to warrant our following either mode.

Plate I. *Fig.* 3.

Sometimes we find the principal light in the centre of the picture gradating to the extremities with a border of dark binding in the whole. By this mode the light has great brilliancy, especially if a small portion of dark is brought in contact with it. This melting of the light into shadow has been carried to great perfection by Corregio and Rembrandt, who most frequently relieved the dark side of their figures by a still darker background, which Reynolds (who has adopted this mode in so many of his works) mentions as giving a rich effect.

If this method is pursued in the management of the light on a hand, or a single head, it is equally applicable, as in a more extensive work. In the landscapes of Claude, who has often placed the sun near the centre of his compositions, we find the light managed upon the same broad principle, gradating to the sides of the canvass by means of buildings, ships, &c. with often a clump of dark trees jutting into the mass of light, thereby giving it its brilliant character, and serving at the same time to convey the dark sides into the picture. If he reminds us occasionally of Rembrandt, it arises from his great breadth of effect; if of Corregio, it is the soft union of its lights with the shadow. A few walks in the evening in the twilight, and at night in scenery where nature has an opportunity of showing her various effects, will put the student in possession of a power to unravel all her mysteries. We do not know whether Claude, Corregio, and Rembrandt were acquainted with the works of one another, but we have the most evident proofs that they were well acquainted with

the principle by which nature produces her most striking effects; and a breadth of light and shade, soft and subdued tones of colour, and every requisite for forming the mind of an artist, is still to be found in the same school in which they studied.

Plate I. *Fig.* 4.

If the lights are to predominate in a picture from the ground being low in tone, it is of the utmost consequence that they should not only be varied in form and magnitude, but that they should produce an agreeable arrangement in the picture, seeing that they will attract greater notice than when the ground is lighter.

I shall here take the liberty of introducing a passage from Reynolds's works, as nothing can exceed it in utility and justness of observation. In his notes upon Fresnoy, speaking of light and shade, he says, " The same rules, which have been given in regard to the regulation of groups of figures, must be observed in regard to the grouping of lights; that there shall be a superiority of one over the rest, that they shall be separated and varied in their shapes, and that there should be at least three lights; the secondary lights ought, for the sake of harmony and union, to be of nearly equal brightness, though not of equal magnitude with the principal."

The Dutch painters particularly excelled in the management of light and shade, and have shown, in this department, that consummate skill which entirely conceals the appearance of art.

" Jan Steen, Teniers, Ostade, Du Sart, and many others of that school may be produced as instances, and recommended to the young artist's careful study and attention.

" The means by which the painter works, and on which the effect of his picture depends, are light and shade, and warm and cold colours. That there is an art in the management and disposition of those means will be easily granted, and it is equally certain, that this art is to be acquired by a careful examination of the works of those who have excelled in it.

" I shall here set down the result of the observations which I have made on the works of those artists who appear to have best understood the management of light and shade, and who may be considered as examples for imitation in this branch of art.

" Titian, Paul Veronese, and Tintoretto were among the first painters who reduced to a system what was before practised without any fixed principle, and consequently neglected occasionally. From the Venetian painters Rubens extracted his scheme of composition, which was soon understood and adopted by his countrymen, and extended even to the minor painters of familiar life in the Dutch school.

" When I was at Venice, the method I took to avail myself of their principles was this: when I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent light, and this without any attention to the subject or to the drawing of the figures. A few trials of

this kind will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike: their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights; another quarter to be as dark as possible; and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half shadow.

"Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarce an eighth: by this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant, but it costs too much; the rest of the picture is sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist.

"By this means you may likewise remark the various forms and shapes of those lights, as well as the objects on which they are flung; whether a figure or the sky, a white napkin, animals, or utensils, often introduced for this purpose only. It may be observed, likewise, what portion is strongly relieved, and how much is united with its ground; for it is necessary that some part (though a small one is sufficient) should be sharp and cutting against its ground, whether it be light on a dark or dark on a light ground, in order to give firmness and distinctness to the work; if, on the other hand, it is relieved on every side, it will appear as if inlaid on its ground. Such a blotted paper, held at a distance from the eye, will strike the spectator as something excellent for the disposition of light and shadow, though he does not distinguish whether it is a history, a portrait, a landscape, dead game, or any thing else; for the same principles extend to every branch of the art.

" Whether I have given an exact account, or made a just division of the quantity of light admitted into the works of those painters, is of no very great consequence; let every person examine and judge for himself: it will be sufficient if I have suggested a mode of examining pictures this way, and one means at least of acquiring the principles on which they wrought."

This is so admirable as to need no comment, and ought never to be lost sight of, as upon the management of light and shade depends the general look of the picture.

Plate I. *Fig.* 5.

As a wall or flat surface recedes from the light, it necessarily becomes darker, and as the outline is more or less defined, it has the property of advancing or receding. These may seem to be properties too evident to every one to need any explanation; but, when we see a foreground, in place of coming flat up to the edge of the frame, appear to slope down like a declivity, we must either suppose that the painter knew not the principle of assisting the perspective by means of light and shade, or had not the faculty of seeing nature. When we consider that nature spreads out her landscape upon a horizontal plane, and that we have to compete with her upon an upright surface, we shall find we have not only to call in to our aid strong light, coming in contact with sharp dark, warm colours, and such as have the property of advancing, but to subdue the more distant part of the ground by soft shadow and retiring cool tints.

Plate I. *Fig.* 6.

When the composition is kept dark, forming a mass of shadow in the centre of the canvass, the light is often conducted round it by means of the sky, water, or light foreground; and as the dark becomes in a manner isolated, it receives great vigour and importance. As this is the reverse of Fig. 3, we find the same simple broad principle predominant, and whether it be composed of a clump of trees, or the dark dress of a whole-length figure, we find the management guided by the same rules; only if a portrait, the circumstance of the face coming light off the background requires the feet or base of the figure to tell dark on the ground, for the sake of firmness; and if any part is more lost in the background than another, it perhaps ought to be the middle portion of the figure. If a clump of trees, such as we often find in Claude, is to be represented, their stems shoot out from a ground of the same darkness, thereby producing a union of the trees with the shadow which they cast on the ground. As a light in the centre of dark tints must thereby acquire an increased consequence, so a dark in the middle of light tints receives the same importance.

Plate I. *Fig.* 7.

I have noticed in another place the union of one part of the picture with another, by means of a repetition of the light: it will therefore be unnecessary to say any thing further upon such management. I may however observe that it is not only of service to repeat the light, but, also, that it should be of the same colour; accordingly we observe in Cuyp, whose principal light is often yellow, that it is carried into the dark part of the picture by means of yellow drapery, a cow, sheep, or a few touches of golden colour, according as he wishes such extension of his light large or small. If the principal light is cold, such as blue and white, we find it repeated either by a reflection in water, or a figure dressed in the same cool tint. Portrait painters generally make use of the light in the sky to repeat the lights of their head and hands, by making it of the same colour.

Plate II.

Rembrandt, from his first commencement in the art, seems to have been always solicitous to represent the brightness of light at the sacrifice of every other quality; and in his first works it often forms a circumscribed spot, for, as Reynolds justly observes, "that light must appear the brightest which is surrounded by the greatest quantity of shade;" but though this conduct enables the artist to give light one of its strong characteristics, whether it be the sun, a candle, fire, &c. yet there are other properties quite as essential, and more easy to contend with, which are its effects on the different objects it illuminates. Rembrandt's close attention to nature soon led him to expand his principle; for example, he perceived the flame of a candle exceeded in brightness every thing round it in a tenfold ratio, which could be expressed only by darkening the whole, and leaving the light in a spot, and thereby extinguishing its influential effect: but if the candle itself was hid, the appearance of every object under its influence was not only more easily given, but the effect of the whole became more deceptive and natural. His extending of the light through the picture gradually became more enlarged; and even his deepest shadows are illuminated by streaks of red or rich brown running into them, which (from his principal light being of a warm tone) keep up a connection without destroying the breadth of light and shade.

In Fig. 1 of this Plate, "Christ restoring the Daughter of Jairus," we have a principle upon which many of his pictures are constructed, *viz.* a ray of light falling into an apartment, and received upon a light object

Fig. 1.

Rembrandt.

Fig. 2.

Rembrandt

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which, as in nature, reflects back the rays, and illuminates the surrounding objects, giving thus his principal light the properties of light itself. The shadows of all objects receiving such direct rays, we sometimes see strongly defined, as is the case in nature, and indeed we often find Rembrandt placing objects for the express purpose of producing such shadows, which gives an appearance of truth to the whole effect; at other times we find the shadows swallowed up in the splendour of the light, as if afraid of disturbing its breadth. Sometimes we find his strong light, his strong dark, and his hot and cold colours, all focused at one point; and at other times his darks employed to clear up the middle tint, and his strongest colours made the means of uniting his light with the shade. In short, whatever was his practice, he seems always to have had some end to accomplish, and when we find him departing from what would be the effect in nature under such circumstances, we may rest assured that such departure did not arise from ignorance. We often see the attempts of de Hooge and others of representing light confined to its effect in the sky or on the objects out of doors, while it is but sparingly admitted on the figures seen within the apartment; on the contrary, Rembrandt's figures are lighted up with a splendour which extinguishes every other subordinate light, and which we often cannot account for upon the common principles of nature.

The subject below in Plate II. is from a picture in the Louvre, and shows how small a portion of light sometimes engaged Rembrandt's solicitude. He has employed the edge of the frame work, the dark under the cradle, and the dark dress of the figure to give it its value. The curtain is a dull red, and is carried into the picture by the dress of the child being of the same colour.

Plate III. Fig. 1, and 2.

Fig. 1 and 2 represent the "Taking down from the cross" and the "Presentation in the temple." Daulby, in his catalogue, mentions two states of the original etchings more worked upon; but I find, on examination, they are merely the plates left without being much wiped, thereby casting a stain over the whole, except a high light on the cap of the figure holding the crosier, and a light at the torch in the "Taking down from the cross," the copper being made clean at those places. In many of the varieties of Rembrandt's etchings he has got credit for effects supposed to be produced by much labour, which were the result of the printing alone. In the descent from the cross he has kept the principal light in the upper part of the picture in contact with the strong dark; in the other it is kept below, and is carried upwards by a chain of communication to the head of the crosier. Where the light is at one side, or low down in the picture, such as in the "Wise Men's offering," in the king's collection, there is greater space for a breadth of shadow, than when the light is kept in the centre, as was the principle of most of his first works. In some of his designs he seems to have allowed the entire half of his canvass for repose, and to have confined his composition with all its lights, and darks, and colours, to the other half. Very little often serves to connect the two.

Fig. 1.

Rembrandt.

Fig. 2.

Rembrandt.

Fig. 3.

Vandyke.

Fig. 4.

Metzu.

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The dark manner of Rembrandt has advantages over every other, if kept within due bounds, as it enables the painter to give a rich tone to his colours without their appearing heavy, which more feeble backgrounds would not admit of, unless the colours are to stand as darks instead of lights; accordingly we find Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Rembrandt, and our own Reynolds, all swayed by the same opinion.

Plate III. *Fig.* 3.

When the light part of the composition is placed upon the dark side of the background, and the dark part upon the light side, greater firmness and solidity are produced, and a more equal balance is kept up. The contrary method has more breadth and softness of effect, but unless the light part is of a different hue from the light ground upon which it may be placed, and the dark part is of a warmer or colder tone than the shadow which surrounds it, there is a danger of their losing their substance and becoming flat. Vandyck, in this composition, has made the colours of his figures assist his arrangement of light and shade, the white dress of the child and the yellow dress of the queen make the principal light; the white is repeated by the cap, ruff, &c. of the other figures; the yellow is carried across by the embroidery upon the king's dress, and spread out upon the under part of the sky; the darks are

made up of the dark dress of the king and the child's dress, which is a dull green; the latter tint is carried across the picture by part of the curtain turned up, of the same colour; the curtain itself is a dull yellow and brown, serving as a ground to the queen's dress; the red cloth of the table is repeated by the two chairs; the floor being a dark neutral tint gives a firmness to the bottom of both the figures. If the student, in examining the light and shade of a picture, remarks what colours are resorted to for such purpose, in a few trials he will find that which at first appears complicated and difficult to unravel will become easy and beneficial, serving to strengthen his powers of reflection in the highest degree.

Plate III. *Fig.* 4.

The dark forming the greatest mass of shadow of the picture is often, before being brought in contact with the extreme light, increased and collected to a point by some object whose local colour conduces to such purpose, as in the example here given; where the black dress of the female is brought, at its darkest portion, in contact with the lightest portion of the white dress. This serves to give air to the deepest shades of the background, and greater firmness to the object so relieved. The collecting to one head of all the light, and all the dark of a piece, gives the artist the greatest force of the palette. To enable the other side of the picture to keep up with so much vigour, Metzu has thrown his strong colour into the scale, and brought his red and blue in contact, by a glove lying upon the chair, at the point nearest the eye. The warm colour is taken to the other side by a dog, &c. and the white of the female repeated by a handkerchief the man holds in his hand, his neckcloth, &c.

Plate IV. Fig. 1.

In a single head we often have but one light; it is therefore necessary to get it to harmonize with the shadow, either in the background or upon the dress. Rembrandt, accordingly, frequently painted the light of the dress of the same colour as the shadow side of the face, thereby keeping up a union and simplicity. In Fig. 2 we have the hands making a second light; and in Fig. 3 we have three spots of light, the shirt and ruffles of both hands: this is the Titian Reynolds thus mentions in the description of the Dusseldorf gallery, and which is now in Munich: "A portrait of a gentleman, by Titian, a kitcat; one hand a-kimbo, the hand itself not seen, only a bit of the ruffle; the other, the left, rests on what appears to be his sword; he is looking off. This portrait has a very pleasing countenance, but is not painted with much facility, nor is it at all mannered; the shadows are of no colour; the drapery being black, and the ground being very near as dark as it, prevents the arm a-kimbo from having a bad effect. It is no small part of our art to know what to bring forward in the light, and what to throw into shade."

The linen in this picture, and most others of Titian, is light and cutting, the flesh forming the half light. Reynolds, talking of the Descent from the Cross, by Rubens, says, "he well knew what effect white linen, opposed to flesh, must have, with his powers of colouring; and the truth is, that none but great colourists can venture to paint pure white linen near flesh; but such know the advantage of it." In Rembrandt we generally find the same treatment, although I have often observed the linen kept

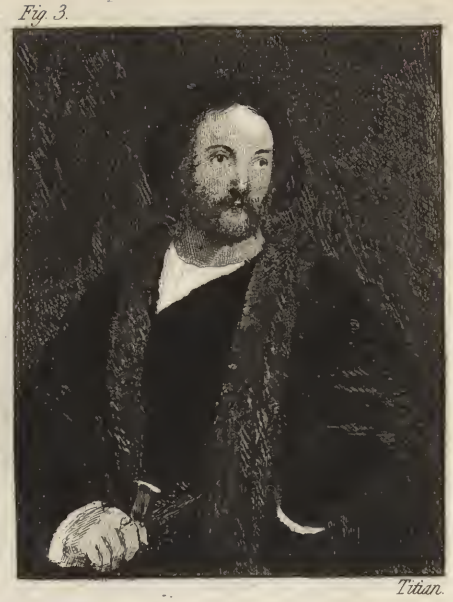
Fig. 1.

Rembrandt.

Fig. 2.

Rembrandt.

Fig. 3.



Titian.

Fig. 4.

Vandyke.

Fig. 5.

Vandyke.

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cool when near the face. To give the flesh a luminous character, he often introduces cool tints coming near it, and when he can find nothing else, uses the shadows of linen for such purpose. In Vandyck's early Italian manner we find the linen much brighter than in his later works, where it became more of a leaden cast.

Plate IV. *Fig.* 4, *and* 5.

We sometimes find the light of the sky introduced for the purpose of repeating the lights of the heads and hands, as in Fig. 4; sometimes to spread and enlarge the lights of the head, and give it more consequence, as in Fig. 5. To assist the hand in keeping its situation in this picture, he has defined it by the hat and shadow on the chair. As it is of the utmost consequence that every object should keep its relative distance with regard to the eye of the spectator, it is a good method to define those parts we wish to advance by a dark shadow coming in contact with them, and to surround the retiring portions with a ground of a less opposing character; as we know lines strongly and sharply defined will approach, and those of a softer nature will retire. Such blots are afterwards to be accounted for by the contrivance of the artist: in this consists the application of the background of the figures, one of the most difficult and essential portions of the art.

As light and shade determine the concavities or convexities of all objects, without them the most intelligent outline would be but as a map

or flat surface. If, for example, we take a cup and examine the influence of light and shade upon it, we find in nature those principles which artists have applied to many purposes in painting. We perceive the near edge strongly defined by the light side coming in contact with the shadow, which becomes darker as it descends into the cup; we have the dark side brought firmly off the light, thus giving it the simplest and most effective means of a true representation of its character. This may appear too evident to notice in a work of this nature, which does not profess to give the mere rudiments of the art; but I am convinced that the most intricate principles of painting emanate from very few sources, and that these sources are of a very simple nature. Every thing within our view is filled with examples, and the mind of the student requires only to be directed to an examination, and investigation of the subject, before commencing any work, or while in the progress. He must not only know what is his intention, but must be in possession of the best method of expressing such intention.

Plate V. Fig. I.

When a shadow is carried through the middle of the picture, we have not only an opportunity of giving a breadth of effect; but the receding portion of the sky and perspective of the ground are assisted by their sharpness being swallowed up in repose: see this principle noticed at Fig. 1. Plate V.

Fig. 1.

P. Nolpe.

Fig. 2.

G. Dow.

Fig. 3.

Corregio.

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Plate V. *Fig.* 2, *and* 3.

When the principal light is kept at one side, we have an opportunity of introducing a larger portion of shadow, than when the light is in the centre, which is often of the first consequence, especially if repose is required in the work.

When, as in Fig. 2, a multitude of small objects are introduced into a picture, or when the general arrangement consists of many figures, it is impossible to get a breadth of light and shade, unless many of them are united together of the same strength, so as to form a mass of light, or of dark; but which to do with skill is one of the greatest difficulties; for unless the science is in some measure concealed, it is no longer science. In the confusion of a battle, for example, it is unlikely that two or three white horses should be collected, so as to form a mass of light; and yet we see in Salvator Rosa, and Wouvermans this method adopted; or in a representation of dead game it is equally improbable that we should always find a swan for the same purpose, as in Weeninx. To obviate such apparent artifice of the painter, we find P. Veronese, Tintoretto, and others, making use of the sky, or light buildings, for a principal mass in their large works, consisting of many figures. In the small works of the Dutch school we find the light upon a wall, or on the ground, or in a window, in indoor subjects, and the sky, &c. in open daylight, made use of for this purpose.

Gerard Douw, notwithstanding his extreme finish, contrived to preserve that breadth of light and shade, which his instruction in the school of Rembrandt had empowered him to do; and in small works this breadth of effect is the more difficult to retain, seeing, that there is so little space for the middle tints, darks, lights, and reflected lights, to be observed in nature, and withal, for a certain bluntness in the outline, to prevent the several objects from looking like small models. Reynolds, in his notes to Fresnoy, to illustrate this quality, says, "we may have recourse to Titian's bunch of grapes, which we will suppose placed so as to receive a broad light and shadow; here, though each individual grape on the light side of the bunch has its light, and shadow, and reflection, yet altogether they make but one broad mass of light; the slightest sketch, therefore, where this breadth is preserved, will have a better effect, will have more the appearance of coming from a master hand, that is, in other words, will have more the characteristic and *generale* of nature, than the most laborious finishing where this breadth is lost or neglected." One method amongst many which we sometimes find Gerard Douw adopting, so as to convey an appearance of high finishing, and yet preserve the breadth of nature, is to give the texture, or surface of an object without altering the tints. For example, in painting a piece of carpet or tapestry, he seems to have laid in his broad lights and shadows, and, while wet, applied a piece of fine cloth, so as to leave an impression of the threads over the whole, then in the high lights to have touched each thread with light, and in the shadow with dark touching, which, did the lines accord with the undulation of the folds, would have given a true appearance of the breadth and detail of nature.

The art of giving a finished look to a picture is one of the most difficult departments of painting, for under it is implied the exact strengthening of the different shades and colours, which defines their relative situations in the picture, the introduction of and detailing the minute parts, without disturbing the great breadth of the whole, and the giving to different substances their several and proper characters. The term finish, when applied to colouring, implies giving to the representations of objects that exact tone which the objects themselves possess in nature under the same circumstances, either by repeated glazings with transparent washes, or by a careful mixture of the colours on the palette in the first instance.

As the principle of placing the light at the side of the picture has already been noticed at Plate III, I shall, in adverting to Fig. 3 of the present plate, merely mention the colour.

The principal light is composed of the white and blue garments of Christ, and repeated in the sky, it being of the same cool tint; the warm light of the angel makes the principal for the head and hands of Christ, and is repeated by a torch carried by figures in the distance. So much cold colour being admitted on the lights, requires the shadows to be kept warm, to prevent the picture from looking heavy; accordingly we find Coreggio has kept the darks of a rich brown: Rembrandt, who was master of this department of art, when his light is cool, makes his shadows the hotter the darker they become; Rubens, who formed his style of colouring upon the Venetian, seems to have been guided by the same opinion. In one of his maxims he says, " Begin by painting in your shadows lightly, taking care that no white is suffered to glide into them; it is the poison of a picture except in the lights; if ever your shadows are

corrupted by the introduction of this baneful colour, your tones will no longer be warm and transparent, but heavy and leady. It is not the same in the lights, they may be loaded with colour as much as you think proper." Whoever examines the works of the great colourists, will find this impasting of the lights, and keeping the shadows rich, juicy, and transparent, was their universal practice. The original of this subject, which is in the possession of the duke of Wellington, has this character, as indeed have all the works from Coreggio's own hand. Opie in his lectures gives a clear definition of Coreggio's management of chiaroscuro, as follows:

"By classing his colours, and judiciously dividing them into few and large masses of bright and obscure, gently rounding off his light, and passing, by almost imperceptible degrees, through pellucid demi-tints and warm reflexions, into broad, deep, and transparent shade; he artfully connected the fiercest extremes of light and shadow, harmonized the most intense opposition of colours, and combined the greatest possible *effect* with the sweetest and softest *repose imaginable*."

Plate VI. Fig. 1.

I have noticed in another place, that when the darks of the group are brought off the light side of the background, greater firmness is obtained, and more vivacity, which latter is the peculiar character of daylight. Cuyp, by placing his figures in such a position as to throw long shadows across the picture, gives a great appearance of sunshine. If the strong

Fig. 1.

Cuyp.

Fig. 2.

Vandyke.

Fig. 3.

P. Potter.

Fig. 4.

Cuyp.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Rembrandt.

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darks are placed on the delicate half light, instead of on the strong light, they have greater force, as the ground has a more retiring quality: the strong colours have also a more natural appearance, as in the event of colours being opposed to the glare of light, their brilliancy is destroyed.

A few small touches of light are sufficient to convey the light into the dark side of the picture, and to take off the heaviness of the shadows. In compositions, when the background is very dark, we find shining substances, such as mirrors, metal, armour, &c. employed, as they take on a sharp light, and thereby connect the shade with the light without destroying its breadth; on the contrary, they add to its depth.

Plate VI. *Fig.* 2.

When the light part of the group is placed upon the light side of the ground, provided there can be sufficient firmness given, we must of necessity have a greater breadth of effect. Vandyck has in this picture kept the principal light upon the sleeve of the jacket (which makes the most prominent point), and has diffused it upon the sky. The cool tints of the shadows of the jacket, and part of a blue ribbon detach it from the under part of the sky, which is warm. The warm colouring of the boy, and the cloak which he carries, and the king's breeches being of a dull

red, assist the arrangement. The warm colours are carried into the shadow side of the picture by the dun colour of the horse, the stump of the tree, and the saddle cloth. The cool blue of the sky mixes with the foliage of the trees, and prevents it from interfering with the hat, which has greater point in consequence, and balances the shadow side of the picture, besides drawing the attention of the spectator to the head. The warm colour of the flesh necessarily detaches itself from the cool ground; but in such situations we often find Rubens and all his pupils bring strong blue in contact with the head, which gives it a great value, and a luminous effect. We thus perceive a light figure may be strongly relieved even by a light background, provided the colours are opposed to each other; thereby preserving the greatest breadth of light.

Plate VI. *Fig.* 3.

We have in this subject the dark of the group brought off the light part of the ground with great firmness, and a very large portion of the outline sharp and cutting, which, though it may give the strong feature of natural objects, has a harsh appearance at first sight. Whether it be that in real objects their actual existence enables them to harmonize with the harshest effects of light and shade; or that the real separation of one part from another, admits of a strength of colour incompatible with a flat surface, such as an outline on canvass, is worthy of the student's examination; as in nature he will often find the most distant parts of an object more sharp and cutting than the nearest outlines, and yet keep their situation. To represent this on canvass requires the most scientific management; as a work may have the strength and freshness of nature, without being a just representation, when the situation of one part with regard to another is taken into the account.

Potter in this picture (in which the objects are of the natural size) has made use of the simplest and firmest principles, as regards light and shade. We have the group strongly defined by part of it coming light off a dark ground, and dark off a light one; we have the composition

taking a decided form in one direction, and the light running across it in another; we have therefore the strong look of nature, which consists of simplicity, decision, and strength.

In the early masters we have these qualities often in a high degree; and had they less of an inlaid flat appearance, would be more valuable than the more harmonious softenings of modern light and shade; but we must never forget that objects in nature are more or less round, that they are delicate as well as forcible, and that the harshest colours are under the influence of light and shade.

Plate VI. *Fig.* 4.

The light part of the group is here brought in contact with the light part of the background, and the shadow assisted in its strength by the local colour of the objects placed within it. The yellow cow, which makes the light, is surrounded by others of a dull red and brown, which are relieved by a still darker ground. This gives a great breadth to the group. The cool colour of the upper part of the sky is carried across the picture by the grass and leaves being of a cool green; the dark sharp marking of the horns, eyes, &c. gives a lightness and finish to the whole, as it allows the broad lights and shadows to have more union. In Cuyp the local colour of his objects, whether hot or cold, is kept up undisturbed by the light and shade; this gives great breadth and the distinctness of nature in open daylight.

Plate VI. *Fig* 5.

In this subject we have the light figure upon the dark ground, and vice versa. In nature we often perceive strong effects arising out of simple and decided principles, which, if sketched at the time, will be of the utmost value to the student, by giving him an insight into the science of light and shade; and will often serve as a key to commence with in forming larger combinations. Reynolds mentions a mode of composing

by taking a figure from some celebrated master, and designing others to correspond with it; thereby imparting a grandeur of style to the whole. So, by commencing with something sketched from nature, we give a decided look of truth to the other parts of the picture.

Many painters model their groups for the purpose of obtaining a true representation of the light and shade. Small figures, however rude in form, will serve this purpose, and give the artist many invaluable hints.

Tintoretto and Coreggio, both great masters of chiaroscuro, are known to have availed themselves of this method; and the student must have a most erroneous idea of his art, who imagines excellence can be obtained without the assistance of every auxiliary. The most learned arrangements of light and shade may astonish; but there is a charm in the chiaroscuro of nature which carries irresistible sway.

Plate VI. *Fig.* 6.

In this subject we have the dark group brought off the light side of the background in the simplest and most decided manner; and the principles of light and shade made applicable to giving the strong look of nature, viz. breadth and solidity to the ground, and light and extent to the sky. Rembrandt has often been accused of being artificial in his effects, but he never misses his aim, either in representing the splendid emanations of light, or the quiet depths of shadow; the peculiar character of an object,

either in texture or in colour, and that appearance, familiar to the recollection of every one; but to convey which, either in poetry or in painting, is only in the power of a few.

Rembrandt seems always to have taken up a leading feature in his works, and never to have lost sight of it. The varieties in his prints are but corroborations of this: as in his anxiety for its preservation we trace him destroying every impediment, either by covering down or burying whole groups in shadow, or by leaving in an unfinished state other groups, with a mere outline to define them. For example, if we take the first state of the print of the great Ecce Homo, we perceive he has made Christ in the centre of a group, in a quiet broad mass of light, with the strong darks gradating from him, right and left, and surrounded by masses of half tint. He has then etched in the principal group, commencing with the figure addressing the multitude, and terminating with the right hand of Pilate. This portion being in strong light, interspersed with a variety of strong darks, acquires by this means great brilliancy and agitation. We have therefore the quiet character of Christ preserved, and his superiority maintained, by his forming the centre of one group, and the apex of the other, rising, as Fuseli describes it, "like a pyramid from the tumultuous waves below."

If we take his print of the Angels appearing to the Shepherds, in the first state we find a broad mass of shadow running through the centre in a diagonal line, thus giving it its greatest magnitude. In the upper part is preserved the principal light, radiating from a centre, with a multitude of children, sporting in its beams, and out of which the angel addresses

the shepherds across this gulf of shadow. The second light, which is in the lower portion of the print, he has in the next state, cut up by a number of darks and lights, irregularly dispersed, thus conveying the appearance of confusion and terror to the shepherds, their herds, and flocks, which are represented flying in all directions. These two examples out of many, which the student will discover by his own examination, will suffice to show that light and shade may be made to contribute to the character and fitness of the subject; and that of this adaptation of it, Rembrandt holds unrivalled possession.

Plate VII.

When a picture is chiefly composed of light and half tint, the darks of the figures must necessarily tell with great force, from there being so little of half shade to rob them of their value; the mid-day sun filling with intense light every particle of the atmosphere, gives that luminous appearance, which is so strongly characteristic of an out of door effect, the dark local colours of the figures, from the absorption of the rays, retain undiminished power, and give that firmness and vivacity to the scene which prevents it from looking feeble. In nature, figures from their upright position, have a greater consequence from the flat shadows being

Fig. 1.

A. Vandivelde.

Fig. 2.

A. Vandivelde.

Fig. 3.

Claude.

Fig. 4.

J. Ostade.

Fig. 5.

Cuyp.

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weakened by the light of the sky falling into them; for, seeing that the whole heavens are filled with light, it is showered down and reflected in all directions. Also, from their being in motion, they attract the eye; a circumstance to be noticed by the artist, who has to give them their relative value on canvass, as they possess in reality. The consideration of all these circumstances influences many painters, in giving the darks the full force of the palette. As a general character and the leading features of strong daylight are to be purchased at any sacrifice, critics who do no tsufficiently investigate these matters, may complain of want of air, but the student, by a close attention to the subject, will not easily be scared by the cry of "*sans vapeur*."

Birds in the air, boats on the water, figures on the sands, cornfields, or light roads, have all this characteristic feature in a high degree, from the middle tint being on so light a key.

Cuyp often accomplishes this by the general tone of the picture being warm, and his shadows brownish, thereby allowing his blue draperies and cool blacks to have greater point. P. Veronese and Rubens have many pictures on the same principle.

Opposition of colour is of great importance in the treatment of pictures on a light key, as it gives great relief and distinctness without cutting up the breadth of light; such as blue upon a warm ground, or red upon a cool one, bright yellow upon a cool gray, &c. In No. 3, Claude has made great use of such opposition. The general appearance of the picture is warm, the dark blue of the water is carried across the piece by the dark blue draperies of some of the figures, and is suffused upon

the upper part of the sky. The red is interspersed upon the boats and the draperies of the other figures; and, warming the near part of the buildings, is repeated at the top by a figure looking over the balcony and two red flags upon the blue of the sky. He has placed two blue flags upon the warm part of the sky to repeat the cool colour.

Pictures painted on a dark key have already been noticed as possessing many advantages, which have led our greatest colourists to its adoption. But as low toned pictures are apt to look heavy and black, unless richness of shadows, or sharpness of lights be preserved; so pictures painted on a light key are apt to look flat and unfinished, unless the greatest circumspection be used. In nature, the intense light of the sky, and the atmosphere, which is filled with its innumerable refractions, spread a luminous character over the whole scene; to represent which the artist can employ only a greater degree of whiteness, a very inadequate quality, and hence the great difficulty of imitating the splendid brightness of mid-day, or the brilliant effects of an evening sky. In treating the one, unless the delicate varieties of the half lights are attended to with the greatest care, the picture will look crude and unfinished; for the tints being so nearly allied to each other, the exact sharpness to define them, and their exact tone, either by repeated scumbling, or mixing them to the proper tint in the first instance, require an attention and study of the most refined quality; without which the shadows will be powdery instead of pearly, or the lights white instead of luminous. In the other arrangement the yellow tones may become solid and foxy, if deprived of the delicate cool tints so necessary to prevent their appearing too hot, and to give the whole that tremulous unsteady appearance which light possesses in nature.

Light pictures, from the tenderness of their light and shade, require the colours opposed to each other, whether blue opposed to red, or yellow to cool gray, to be managed with the greatest delicacy; otherwise their strength will destroy all appearance of light and air. In light pictures strong colours can stand only as middle tint, or for leading the light into the shade, but can appear as lights only by being relieved by strong shadow. We often find them, as in P. Veronese, &c. standing as darks, or made use of to give objects an appearance of solidity, without breaking up the general mass of light in the picture.

Plate VIII.

I shall here recur to the subject of middle tint, for the purpose of taking a general view of the various modes of arranging this important branch of light and shade; as upon the strength of the middle tint depends, in a great measure, the general look of the picture. By the middle tint is meant the medium between the extreme dark and extreme light; but as such a scale is too gross to take in all the gradations lying between so opposite qualities, I have, for the sake of clearness, made use of intermediate links, *viz.* half dark and half light. If we take a ground of a shade composed chiefly of half dark and middle tint, and introduce the strongest lights, we shall find it necessary to introduce a portion of half light to spread and break down their harshness. If the extreme dark is placed upon the middle tint, it will by contrast render it more in union with the half light; if it be placed on the half dark, a breadth of shadow and softness will be the result. Harshness of effect in treating pictures upon a dark scale arises, most commonly, from the want of sufficient quantities of middle tint and half light, thereby causing the principal light to be too much defined; as we frequently observe in the works of Michael Angelo Caravaggio.

Rembrandt and Coreggio excelled all others in the introduction of demi tints, which illuminate their deepest shadows. In their works and in

Fig. 1.

Hondekooter.

Fig. 2.

Wouvermans.

Fig. 3.

Teniers.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Frank Hals.

Fig. 6.

Titian.

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nature we perceive the lowest tones of middle tint are removed from blackness, either by their warmth, or the introduction of some positive black or blue, to produce an appearance of air floating within them.

The exact quantity of middle tint must depend upon the arrangement of the subject and the taste of the painter; but it is absolutely necessary, to prevent it from always interposing betwixt the extreme light and extreme dark.

This invariably gradual declination of the light into the shadow is one cause of the insipid look of most of Vanderwerf's works, nor is it, as Sir Joshua Reynolds justly observes, consonant with the effects in nature. Variety demands some portion of the composition to be sharp and cutting; and richness is to be obtained only by a continual changing of portions coming sometimes dark and sometimes light off the ground; this endless variety in nature can be imitated only by this intricate weaving of the outline with the background: so that the same sound principles which guide the conduct in the treatment of the whole, may be traced in the management of the detail.

Middle tint, in pictures painted on a light key, ought to be in some measure robbed of its consequence, either by the introduction of reflected lights, or positive half lights; for if it occupies too large a portion of the canvass, the work must of necessity lose its characteristic feature. We must therefore depend upon some other agent to prevent the picture being flimsy, and void of that solidity which is so inherent in the most delicate of nature's works. Accordingly we find small sharp darks introduced, the value of which has been noticed in another place; and

(what is of the utmost importance) a sharp edge to the lights and half shadows throughout the whole.

The light pictures of Teniers and Cuyp are full of this precision in the touch, a flatness in the shades, a sharpness in the handling, and a distinctness in the most approximate colours; by this alone a general breadth can be preserved, and the most splendid light (even of a sky) filled with a multitude of forms.

In this notice of middle tint or ground of the picture, I may appear to have recapitulated what has already been said in other parts of the work; but my anxiety to put the student in possession of every information in my power urges me to place it before his eyes in every point of view.

The management of light and shade, as relates to a whole, ought to be always present in the student's mind, as it is from inattention to this alone that a work is often destroyed in its progress. In the commencement of a picture those parts only are strongly defined, or marked in, which are of the greatest importance; and the other portions are left in a broader and less obtrusive state. But in the progress of the work the proper subordination of the latter is often injuriously diminished.

The general character of an object is its most important feature, and this is to be preserved at the price of every other quality, if it cannot be retained upon other terms; as it is this which is imprinted on the mind of every one, and which is therefore paramount to all its other properties. If the object does not possess this feature upon the canvass, it cannot

attract or interest the spectator, as in all probability its other properties are unveiled except to the artist alone, who has examined it attentively. For example, in a portrait, when we see the head alone finished, it often pleases more than when the work is complete; our attention is led involuntarily to the countenance, which would be the case were we introduced to the original; and this preponderance, which exists in nature, must of necessity become less when in the finished work the other portions of the picture have received a greater consequence. The importance of the countenance, the general character of the flesh, *viz.* its transparency, breadth of local colour, luminous appearance, &c. may be all lost from the injudicious introduction, in the other parts of the picture, of lights, darks, and middle tints, in the artist's anxiety for richness of effect, or in his wish to give splendour and harmony by the strength or variety of his colours.

In sketching a landscape from nature, when we have time only to put down the leading features, detailing such objects alone as are striking or interesting, we find the spectator often more satisfied from feeling a corresponding sensation from the truth of the representation imprinted on his mind, than when, in a more finished work, the painter has destroyed the great breadth and luminous character of the sky for the purpose of mixing the shadows of the clouds with the trees, &c. to counteract flatness, or when he has subdued the strength of his colours for the sake of taking off their harshness. When he begins to define the different parts for the sake of finish, unless he has the treatment of the picture as a whole constantly before his eye, the expansive look of the sky, the fresh and decided appearance of nature in the colours, the gray tones and soft

markings of the aerial perspective may all disappear, and give place to requisites of an inferior kind.

In all objects in nature there is something predominant, and which alone has struck the observation of every one. If the artist gives that, he brings his object at once home "to men's bosoms," and without which his greatest labour is but industrious trifling. The character of an object depends upon a particular colour, a particular touch, a particular concentration or diffusion of light, according to its form or substance; to obtain which ought to be the constant study of the student, as it is the language of his art, and the only language universally understood.

I have in these brief notices of the art of light and shade endeavoured to point out the various modes of establishing a scientific arrangement of its powers, and applying them to any subject the student may have in hand. The changes are infinite; but, by an attentive examination of the effects in nature or in art, he will find the sources from which they arise few and simple. Opie in his lectures, speaking of chiaroscuro, strongly recommends the study of the several masters who have excelled in this department of the art, "By studying the works of the great masters of chiaroscuro, he will by degrees become acquainted with all the artifices of contrasting light to shade, colour to colour, to produce relievo, of joining light objects together, and dark objects together, in masses, in order to give splendour and breadth of effect; of gradually sinking some objects wholly or partly in shadow, and losing their outlines in the ground, to produce softness and harmony; and of making, in other places, abrupt breaks and sharp transitions, to produce vivacity and spirit. He will

also learn their rules for shaping their masses, and of adapting them in regard to force or softness to the nature of the subject, whether grave or gay, sublime or terrible. By this he must be directed when to give his light the form of a globe, or when to send it in a stream across his canvass; when to make a dark mass on a light ground, or a light mass on a dark ground; when he may let his light die away by imperceptible gradations, when diffuse it in greater breadth and abundance, and when it may more properly be concentrated into one vivid flash." This is so excellent, and embraces so many of the best modes of the management of light and shade, that the student, who can comprehend them and put them in practice, requires no farther instruction in this part of the art. He will be in possession of a key to unlock the richest stores of nature; he will be in possession of a sort of short hand to note down her most fleeting effects; and by understanding the cause which gives them existence, rivet them in his memory. Without having accustomed himself to this mode of arranging his observations, his life will be spent in an endless search after that which is continually passing before his eyes.

Light and shade, considered as a means of producing a deception, by making parts of the picture advance, and other parts retire, so that every thing may keep its relative situation, as regards the distance from the spectator, is a necessary attendant upon perspective. It is, however, often violated in the best works, for the purpose of giving a general breadth, or of preserving the light in a good shape; but, when compatible with both these, it is of the utmost consequence; and the painter can enter into a competition with nature only by a perfect knowledge of the best modes of adapting it to such purpose.

Richness of effect, either by a mixture of the light and shade, so as to give an appearance of doubling to the outline, or by relieving the outline by a ground possessed of a variety of strengths; and distinctness of form, surrounded by flatness, when we wish any part to attract notice, or to preserve the expression undisturbed, are both under the dominion of chiaroscuro, to whose controul the whole array of colours yields implicit obedience.

The application of light and shade, in a poetical point of view, is capable of creating an association of ideas, without which the imagination of the spectator would experience nothing but disappointment. For example, if we represent a scene remarkable for disasters or shipwrecks, the mind is excited, and an expectation raised, which none but an artist imbued with the poetry of the art can gratify, by clothing the scene in all the ominous effects of elemental strife: whether the shadow

" Strangles the travelling lamp:
* * * * * * * * * *
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?"—

or

" The sky seems to pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out."

Shakspeare, who was possessed of all the poetry of the art, clothes his scenery with those circumstances which awaken a thousand pleasing or awful sensations as the subject may require; whether

" The gray ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light."

Whether

"The glorious sun
Stays in his course and plays the alchemist;
Turning with splendour of his precious eye
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold."

or when

"Light thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood."

or when he bids

"Thick night
Pall herself in the dunnest smoke of hell."

We have him adopting the softness and breadth of Coreggio, the splendour and gorgeous effects of Veronese, Rubens, or Cuyp, or the ominous twilight and midnight darkness of Rembrandt or Michael Angelo Caravaggio. His light and shade is the chiaroscuro of nature passing through a mind susceptible of its finest impressions, and capable of placing such effects before the eye of the spectator, "unshorn of their beams," or unimpaired in their sublimity.

FINIS.

C. and C. Whittingham, Chiswick.

PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

COLOUR IN PAINTING.

PRACTICAL HINTS

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COLOUR IN PAINTING.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Examples from the Works

OF THE

VENETIAN, FLEMISH, AND DUTCH SCHOOLS.

BY JOHN BURNET.

"With respect to *Colouring*, though it may appear at first a part of painting merely mechanical, yet it still has its rules, and those grounded upon that presiding principle which regulates both the great and the little in the study of a painter." SIR J. REYNOLDS.

SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.

In this Third Part of the Work, which treats of Colour in Painting, my endeavour has been to investigate and arrange under some tangible form the many loose suggestions which lie scattered in the different authors who have treated of the subject; to collect and commit to paper those rules of practice which artists are guided by, without, perhaps, being aware from what source they have been derived, but which, as Reynolds says, "pass current from one to another;" and to illustrate by slight examples many of the arrangements of colour from the Venetian school (who, with the Bolognese school, were the first to collect

into masses their warm and cold colours), down to the Flemish and Dutch schools, who may be said, by the excellence of their works, to have established upon unerring principles the whole theory of chiaroscuro and colouring. All that constitutes harmony and breadth of effect, and the soft and vigorous tones of nature, is contained in their works; and, various as their combinations of colours appear, they seem to depend upon the simplicity of arrangement for the certainty of their effect.

If, by these few hints thrown together, I have pointed out a shorter road to the student, something has been gained; and should it stimulate his mind to investigate the different combinations of colour which please or offend his eye, a degree of certainty will attend his practice, unattainable by the mere habit of copying either from nature or from art. I have aimed at establishing no theory but such as exists in the works of the best colourists, and those effects in nature which are daily passing before us. If my researches have led me to differ in opinion from former writers, I trust it will be ascribed only to a desire of establishing the truth, a feeling which ought at all times to be paramount to every other consideration. Should it appear that these hints carry the student but little on his way, it must be

remembered that little exists in the shape of a practical treatise upon the science of colour, and even that that little lies scattered in a multitude of disjointed criticisms. To present these in a collected and concentrated form must abridge his labour; to establish them by illustrations derived from widely scattered sources, must abridge it still more.

February, 1827.

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PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

COLOUR IN PAINTING.

OF COLOUR.

The proper situation of strong colour is neither in the high light nor in the deep shade, for it would destroy the character of either; but if it is made use of as an intermediate link, it will unite both; at the same time preserve a greater consequence. Whether it is to be warm or cold must depend upon the colour of the principal light, of which it is to be considered as an extension, conveying its influence into the darkest recesses; and the light will be either warm or cold, according as it mixes itself with the following arrangements: white, yellow, red, brown, black; white, gray, green, blue, black. Vide *Plate* I. *Fig.* 4 *and* 5.

Yet, although colour holds the station of middle tint, it is nevertheless more capable of giving the true representation of natural objects than the most scientific arrangements of chiaroscuro; and by the judicious management of it, a picture is rendered pleasing and attractive. Reynolds justly observes, "By this the first effect of a picture is produced; and as this is performed, the spectator, as he walks the gallery, will stop or pass along." That this principal light influences the other lights, we see in nature, and

in the best colourists; but Mengs says, "that the deepest shades ought also to be of the tint of which the general harmony is composed; because it is supposed that the air is already tinged with this colour, through which the light must of necessity pass." The general tone of the picture, therefore, ought to be determined on in the first instance, as every thing ought to accord with it for the sake of harmony and truth; what this tone is to consist of is therefore of the utmost importance to the student to inquire. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the notes to Du Fresnoy, says, "The predominant colours of the picture ought to be of a warm mellow kind, red or yellow; and no more cold colour should be introduced than will be just enough to serve as a ground or foil to set off and give value to the mellow colours; and never should itself be a principal. For this purpose a quarter of the picture will be sufficient; those cold colours, whether blue, gray, or green, are to be dispersed about the ground or surrounding parts of the picture, wherever it has the appearance of wanting such a foil, but sparingly employed in the masses of light." Also in his Eighth Discourse he recapitulates the same advice. "It ought, in my opinion, to be indispensably observed, that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish white; and that the blue, the gray, or the green colours be kept almost entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours: and for this purpose a small proportion of cold colours will be sufficient. Let this conduct be reversed; let the light be cold, and the surrounding colours warm, as we often see in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters; and it will be out of the power of art, even in the hands of Rubens or Titian, to make a picture splendid and harmonious." Now if this advice was always to be acted upon, the student would not only become a mannerist, but the school to which he belonged become a school of monotony. Pleasure can be conveyed only by imitating the variety always existing in nature. I believe Gainsborough painted the portrait of a boy dressed in blue, now in the possession of Lord Grosvenor, to show the fallacy of this doctrine; which, from his

surrounding the light with rich brown and warm shadows, has produced a splendid effect. Gainsborough seems always to have been aware of the value of warm and transparent shadows: his rich brown tones serve as a foil to the green of his trees, &c., while this colour brings down the blue and yellow tints of his sky and distance, and by this means unites the hot and cold colours in harmony. In nature we as often find the light cool as warm; also in the pictures of many of the Flemish and Dutch schools, where, as Sir Joshua himself mentions, "the silver gray or pearly is predominant, and are valued by the connoisseurs in proportion as they possess this excellence of a silver tint." In the Venetian school he instances the famous Marriage at Cana, in St. George's Church at Venice, (now in the Louvre), "where the sky, which makes a considerable part of the picture, is of the lightest blue colour, and the clouds perfectly white; the rest of the picture is in the same key, wrought from this high pitch." In Rubens we have many examples where the light is cooler than the shadow: one in particular painted upon this principle struck me to be one of the best of his works; the small picture of the "Fall of the Damned" in Munich, formerly the Dusseldorf Gallery. Sir Joshua says, "it is impossible to form an idea of the powers of Rubens without having seen this picture." The upper part of the picture, which represents the abode of the Blessed, consists of sweet pearly tints, gradually diffused over the falling group, while the under part is lighted up by the red glare of the fiery gulf into which they are tumbling. This picture is finished with the greatest care and delicacy, and many parts are drawn with the refined taste of Vandyck. It therefore may be considered to have been a carefully studied work. In Rembrandt, and others of the Dutch school, we find this principle adopted, and the light which is admitted from an opening into the apartment mixed with cool pearly tints, while the shadow is illuminated by a fire in the opposite corner of the picture, evidently introduced for this purpose. If, therefore, Le Brun and others of the French school have failed in producing splendour by such arrangement of colour, we must attribute their failure to some other cause. What

appears to me of infinitely more consequence than the colour of the light, are the colours which compose the shadows and middle tint; if these be warm, the light may be cold, and yet a rich effect preserved; if these are cold, no red or yellow will ever make the work splendid. It therefore appears that strong colour requires rich deep shadow to support it, and render it a portion of the light; and no one was more aware of this than Sir Joshua himself. The warm rich browns of Titian, Rembrandt, and Coreggio, authorize us in this conduct. That the picture should consist of hot and cold colours seems therefore as indispensable as that it should have light and shade; but which shall form the shade, or which the light, is entirely in the option of the artist. It is however necessary that they should have separate situations, and also unite both extremes of the work by an exchange of portions of each colour. We also perceive that according as the shadow is increased in warmth, the light partakes of a portion of its influence: thus in Rembrandt, where the dark masses contain burnt sienna or lake, the blues and grays receive a tinge of yellow; while, in Teniers, whose shades are of a cooler brown, the blues and grays retain a greater degree of freshness. The breadth and harmony observed in nature are produced by the influence of one part over another, and the greatest distinctions are reconciled by an imperceptible adjunct.

That this harmony, however varied and endless in nature, can be reduced to tangible precepts is proved by our receiving the same pleasurable sensations from the contemplation of the best paintings, whether the mind of the spectator be cultivated or uneducated. As the eye is the organ through which we receive all the sensations derived from painting, its prejudices, its likings and dislikings, and the circumstances which have given rise to all these feelings, are to be investigated in the first instance. Colours that are most agreeable to the eye are such as the eye has become accustomed to from their constantly being presented to the sight; such as blue, white, or gray, in skies; green, in trees and grass; brown, or warm gray, in earth, road, or stone. As, therefore, the eye

has been formed upon the contemplation of such colours, the general look of nature can be given only by admitting large portions of such colours into the picture; if they are more vivid than are most commonly observed in nature, the charm is destroyed. All colours rendered familiar by the introduction of artificial means are guided by the same laws; and a green, though quite unnatural when employed upon herbage, might be strictly natural in representing the local colour of a piece of drapery; yet we may safely admit that the most brilliant colours may receive an advantage in being toned to those hues most common in nature, especially if they form a large mass in the picture. This breaking down of the colours by glazing or scumbling is a great cause of that harmonious sweetness observable in the works of the best colourists, and without which a work will always look crude and unnatural.

Without entering into the philosophy of colours, or stopping to inquire whether this harmony depends upon their possessing that order in arrangement which they are found in nature to possess, when separated by the prism or observable in the iris, we cannot but remark in nature a certain accordance arising from each object possessing its due portion of every arrangement. For example, in sunrise, when his disk is visible by reason of the density of the atmosphere, we observe the yellow light round his situation tempered and softened down with delicate gray; which tint being also diffused over the local colours in the landscape gives truth and harmony. In Claude we perceive the same breadth, delicacy, and softness. In the evening, when the atmosphere is less dense, we find the colour of the light more brilliant and less interrupted, tinging with the same hue every object placed within its influence; and this we find also in Cuyp and others who have painted landscapes under the same circumstances.

Now as this union of one part with another, is observable to every one, we see one great cause of harmony, which must be a good foundation for the artist to commence upon; and seeing that this union depends upon the medium between two extremes, we can only produce an agreeable

and natural appearance by employing such means. White and black can be reconciled only by the interposition of gray, and red and blue by the presence of a third colour, combining the properties of hot and cold. Light will more easily be spread by the lesser lights partaking of the same hue as the principal, and shadow diffused by the same means, we thus preserve the breadth observable in nature: but as this would in many cases produce monotony, we have a third quality to consult, which is variety, and which in nature being endless, we have an inexhaustible source to draw upon; and very few colours are necessary to produce this multiplicity of changes, in the employment of which we must however always bear in mind the necessity of preserving the breadth of light and shade, and the balance and union of hot and cold colours.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I.

Fig. 1 represents the colours of the iris, which Sir I. Newton describes as seven, their proportions when produced by means of a prism he calculates to be as follows: supposing the whole to form 100—Red 11, Orange 8, Yellow 14, Green 17, Blue 17, Purple 11, Violet 22; whether the harmony depends upon their natural arrangement, or upon the proportions of each, is more an object of philosophy than of painting, which has to produce an agreeable sensation, independent of all theoretical disquisition. Treatises have been written to prove that the harmony existing in the seven natural notes in music depend upon the same coincidence, insomuch that ocular harpsichords have been constructed exhibiting colours instead of sounds, and professing to give the same gratification to the eye that the common ones give to the ear, thus endeavouring to prove

Plate I.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

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that painting and music are governed by the same laws of harmony. This harmony arising from the iris is noticed by Leonardi da Vinci in his chapter on the beauty of colour; he says, "If you mean that the proximity of one colour should give beauty to another that terminates near it, observe the rays of the sun in the composition of the rainbow;" and I believe the late Mr. West endeavoured to establish a theory upon the same foundation. However, as from any thing I have yet read, and after a careful examination of the best pictures of the greatest colourists, from Titian to our own Reynolds, I shall not perplex the student by a repetition of the theory; that portion which may be of service to the student (and the worst theory may have some remarkable points of coincidence with that which I am about to discuss) I shall endeavour to preserve in its proper place.

Plate I. *Fig.* 2. I have given here the arrangement of Leonardi da Vinci, who says, "The first of all simple colours is white, though philosophers will not acknowledge white or black to be colours, because the first is the cause or receiver of colours, the other totally deprived of them. But as painters cannot do without either, we shall place them among the others; and according to this order of things, white will be the first, yellow the second, green the third, blue the fourth, red the fifth, and black the sixth." From the little Da Vinci has written upon colour (for I believe the work he contemplated upon the subject never was begun) he reduces the number of primary colours to two, for he says, "Blue and green are not simple colours in their nature; for blue is composed of light and darkness, such as the azure of the sky, which is produced by the transparent body of the air illumined by the sun, and interposed between the darkness of the expanse above, and will appear bluer in proportion to the darkness of the space behind it: and green is composed of a simple and mixed colour, being by blue and yellow."

Harmony of colouring requires, he adds, "that the colours ought to be of the same nature; and contrast is produced by bringing colours in con-

tact with others of an opposite character, such as a blue near a yellow, a green near a red, &c.; because each colour is more distinctly seen when opposed to its contrary than to any other similar to it." In these two modes of producing force and harmony he may be said to have laid a foundation for principles to be traced through the works of the best colourists to the present day.

Plate I. *Fig.* 3 represents the arrangement of Mengs, who says, "Colours, properly speaking, are but three; yet as we cannot do without black and white," he makes the primary colours five: viz. "white, yellow, red, blue, black; and secondary colours, or first tints mixed from them, are orange, green, purple, gray, and brown. Harmony" he considers "to consist in the true equilibrium of the different colours regulated by the general tone of the light by which they are illuminated: thus, if the light is yellow, all the colours will appear tinged with the same hue, as the air interposed between them and the eye of the spectator is already tinged with that colour. In the same manner when the air is clear, and the objects illuminated without sunshine, the harmony will be blue, and in all harmony one ought to observe particularly those colours most opposite to the general tone, that they may be used in the foreground, as they will appear more advanced or less under the influence of the atmosphere, also upon their situation one with another: for example, if one employs pure yellow, one should accompany it with the violet, because this is composed of red and blue mixed together; and if we use pure red, we should add for the same reason green, which is a mixture of blue and yellow, using as a foil to each colour one composed of the other two.

"Supposing that harmony has that effect in music which is commonly attributed to it, the sweetness and acuteness of colours will depend upon the natural effect which they occasion to our sight, or produce upon the optic nerves. The most clear colours have more force than the most obscure, because their luminous rays striking the visual nerves cause in part the same effect as a direct light, by filling all the internal part of the

eye with light, occasioning a painful sensation to the eye. Obscure colours have not this effect, because they do not reflect all the rays with the same force: clear colours being most apt to give sensations to our eyes, they ought to be employed where it is required that the eye of the spectator should be attracted, and which the painter wishes shall be the most principal."

Now in all these theories there seem many points of coincidence, and much to be observed, that has a foundation in truth and nature; but when applied to the examination of the works of those who have excelled in colouring, they are inapplicable. In many of the arrangements, the coincidence leads us to conclude that a safe and certain combination exists, equally applicable to the study of nature and the works of the best colourists; and which, therefore, must please the eye of the common observer as well as the connoisseur. To endeavour to point out this satisfactorily to the student, with the imperfect imitations which so small memoranda of the colours can convey (especially as we find harmony to consist more in the media which unite the several colours than in the colours themselves), will require every indulgence. It will have the advantage, however, of diminishing his labour, and enable him to examine many works in a shorter period. I would chiefly have him to observe the quantity of hot and cold colours in a picture, and how the equilibrium is sustained under the infinite variety of combinations; how the light and shade is assisted by the arrangement, and the principal objects are thrown into notice: he will then cease to censure those works which have a cold colour where he expected to find a warm, or a harsh colour where he would have placed a more retiring.

Plate I. In *Fig.* 4 and 5, I have given the arrangement of warm and cold colours, which constitute the scale of hot or cold pictures; by a proper balance of which the characteristic feature of nature may be given, and an harmonious effect produced. In both arrangements we have the greatest breadth preserved; a union of one part with another, and a

general harmony pervading the whole. Cool colours produce a softer influence upon the eye than warm, and excite it less; their predominance therefore in subjects of a soft or tender nature is according to the practice of the best masters, and founded upon a union of the several parts, to preserve the general character of the picture. The introduction of a warm colour will increase this harmony, as those tints which appear distinct from each other will appear less so when compared with one of a still more opposite character: thus the white, blue, gray, and green existing in a landscape will appear more harmonious, and a greater freshness will be produced by the introduction of a red, and that colour will have greater point from the harshness arising from its situation.

Warm colours produce a greater excitement, and therefore arrest the attention or attract the spectator in a greater degree; and their union will be increased by the introduction of a cold colour: thus we find those figures red which are required to attract the eye; and the harmony of a picture, composed of white, yellow, red, and brown, is increased by the introduction of a blue, which in its turn will have more value from its partaking less of that harmony which unites the other colours.

This mode of making the light harmonize with the shade is one cause why we often find a hot or cold colour introduced into a variety of situations; we also find the harmony of a picture sustained by a proper equilibrium of hot and cold, which requires a warm colour to be placed on the cold side of a picture, and *vice versa;* we often find a red or blue placed where the light rounds into the shadow, for the sake of breadth and extension of the light: and seeing that they are the strongest and more opposed than any of the other colours, they are often placed upon the same figure, to draw the attention of the spectator to such point; and notwithstanding we are told by Du Fresnoy and others, "not to permit two hostile colours to meet without a medium to unite them," we see from the earliest times it has been the practice of all the great painters; so that red and blue has in a manner become the dress in which, from custom, we always expect to find certain figures clothed, such as Christ, the Virgin, &c.

Plate I. *Fig.* 6. The means by which a painter produces his effect is by light and shade, hot and cold colours. By dividing the picture into masses of warm and cold colours, he preserves the greatest breadth: his warm tones increase in splendour and richness, from opposition and contrast; also the aerial perspective will be increased, and solidity given to the foreground figures, without the assistance of black shadows. As we find, in the management of chiaroscuro, a small portion of each sufficient to produce an harmonious union, so in the balance of hot and cold colours. By the same means harmony may be produced, and yet the greatest breadth preserved. In nature we find that most objects illuminated by the sun increase in splendour according as they are opposed to a ground of a colder tone; such as buildings, &c. in the evening coming in contact with the northern or eastern sky: and even the moon and stars assume a brightness, as the blue deepens. We therefore find in nature those principles existing which artists have applied to painting, in the treatment of a single head, up to the most extensive compositions. Independent, however, of our introducing cool colours for the purpose of giving splendour and brightness; by the means of contrast, of giving breadth from its resolving the other colours into larger masses; we give that variety which is so characteristic a feature, and which is found to exist in the most trifling as well as in the grandest combinations of nature's colouring.

Fig. 7. The nature of light upon any object is to communicate the colour of its rays to such object, either by impinging them with such colour directly, or from their taking it on from reflection according as they are more or less smooth, or from both causes. We, therefore, see a reason, if the light is of a cool colour, for spreading its effects upon objects receiving its rays, and depriving others of those effects less within its influence; thereby giving it its strong character. For example, when in a picture of common daylight we introduce its rays into an apartment, the objects receiving the strongest impressions from such rays, ought to

produce a sensation of the cool colours, such as the blue, grays, or greens existing without doors, and which impression ought to become more feeble, according as the light is broken up by the reflection of the several colours within the apartment. For all reflected lights, being of a warmer colour when the light is cool (and *vice versa*), give a warmth to the shadows. This then being the leading feature of light, the artist, in conducting it through the picture, so places those local colours that they will assist him in preserving such feature, and heightening with their opposites the properties of the shadows; the employment of science being the investigation of the phenomena existing in nature, and the preservation of their several features unimpaired in the representation.

PLATE II.

Fig. 1. That harmony arising from the reflection of one colour upon the adjoining, so as to produce a blending and union of the several hues, has been practised with the greatest success by many of the Dutch school, producing a chain of connexion between the two extremes of hot and cold. This reflection of colour is more or less powerful according to the brightness of the colour receiving the light in the first instance, and the degree of shadow existing on that part of the adjoining object which receives such reflection. It also depends on the situation of the several objects: it will also be guided by the smoothness or roughness of the objects, for reflected light is regulated by both of these circumstances. For example, the polished surface of grass or foliage, when the light falls upon it, renders such part less green from its reflecting the colour of the sky; and, therefore, when that light is thrown off upon any adjoining object, it is less impinged with green colour. We must also bear in mind that one object receives the colour of the adjoining from two causes; for example, when a ray of light falls upon any object, it is refracted, im-

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

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pinged with the colour of such object, and which it communicates to those adjoining; but, should the latter be of a polished nature, they will also receive the colour from reflection.

Plate II. *Fig.* 2. When a picture is composed of the two extremes of hot and cold, we are certain of having employed the whole strength of the palette; and, if judiciously used to assist the chiaroscuro, an harmonious union will be kept up between these opposite qualities, more forcible and splendid than by the intervention of middle tint: which superiority will always be perceived when such works are attempted to be imitated by mere black and white. When a warm light is surrounded by warm tones, it assumes a breadth and splendour from the appearance of its giving out rays; when it is surrounded by cold ones, it derives a value from contrast. If the strongest colours are placed upon the darks, it will prevent them from being heavy by their strength, and will enable them to appear as influenced by the light, which sensation they otherwise could not convey.

Fig. 3. In producing variety and contrast, we ought never to lose sight of that imperceptible harmony arising from the union of two colours in producing a third composed of both. Whether this be founded upon any law existing in optics, or is merely the result of that sympathy which one colour has to another in producing harmony, we know not. If in the arrangement we bring those colours in contact which have a separate origin, we give a value to each from contrast. Thus a green will give a value to red, and a purple to a yellow; from neither of the primitive colours containing any of those rays which produce the compound colours. Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "That the same colour which makes the largest mass must be diffused and appear to revive in different parts of the picture; for a single colour will make a spot or blot." Though he adds, "This rule should never be neglected," yet we find in the best works of all the great colourists a contrary practice often adopted; for if repeating a colour in several parts of the picture diffuses

it, it also destroys its value from the repetition. We, therefore, often find a colour not only single, but even surrounded by colours of a different tone, thereby increasing its power. In figures of great interest, or in such points as the artist wishes to produce great attraction, this is of the utmost value; and it will not only give such colour the greatest force of the palette, but resolve the other colours into an agreement with one another. Thus a knowledge of the theory of colour will enable the artist to give a vigour to any part of his work, which, without such knowledge, he would always run the risk of destroying.

Plate II. *Fig.* 4. There is a harmony arising from a continuation of the same colour conducted from the extreme light to the deepest shade passing through a variety of gradations. When a composition consists of many figures, a variety of colours becomes necessary; to preserve which from confusion requires simplicity of arrangement: and a union of one part of a picture with another requires repetition of a colour in different parts; but the breadth of light and shade requires such colours to be influenced according as they pass from the high lights into the deep shadows: thus a pale yellow may terminate in a deep brown, and yet a chain of communication be kept up; or a pure white may find repose and union in a pure black; a bright red vibrate (to use a term in music) along a chord terminating in the gentlest echo of such colour, &c. The weaving of these lines of colour through the piece constitutes its harmony; for it is as necessary that colours should take agreeable forms, as light and shade, or composition of lines. In this mode of conducting the colours in a picture, the several schools may be united, and colours of the strong full body found in the Roman school, such as we see in Raphael's works; the mixed and delicately toned colours found in the Dutch school; and the vivid and splendid colour found in the Venetian introduced. Rubens seems to have formed his style from a combination of all the different schools; and even in the small pictures of Teniers we can trace the different modes of producing harmony from the harshest reds and blues

to tints of the most complicated colours. Reynolds says, "Colouring is true when it is naturally adapted to the eye from brightness, from softness, from harmony, from resemblance; because these agree with their objects in nature, and therefore are true, as true as mathematical demonstration; but known to be true only to those who study these things: but, with all this variety, a picture ought to possess repose, for we must take care that the eye be not perplexed and disturbed by a confusion of equal parts or equal lights, or offended by an unharmonious mixture of colours, as we should guard against offending the ear by unharmonious sounds."

Plate II. *Fig.* 5. When the principal light is chiefly composed of cool colours, or tints of a delicate hue, as we often find in the open daylight in nature, the darks ought, for the sake of contrast and force, to be warm; as we know all darks are influenced more or less by the interposition of the atmosphere, which tends to rob them of their strength, and gives them a cooler tone; and as the situation of the strong darks and harsh colours is nearest to the eye, they ought therefore to be less affected by tints which have a retiring property, and the situation of the neutral colours will be between the extreme of the hot and cold colours; for we find in nature a continual harmony kept up between these opposites by a gradual encroachment on the province of each other. For example, in a landscape, let us suppose the sky chiefly composed of blue and white, the distance of blue and gray, the middle ground of warmer gray, interspersed with yellow and green, and the foreground of brown and warm colours; we shall not only have great opposition and force, but the colours of the picture will be constructed on the principles of aerial perspective, which in nature is so great a chain in the harmony of colours. Some of the best of Hobbema's and Ruysdael's are painted upon this arrangement; which seems to have been derived from the practice of Rubens, formed from the contemplation of the works of Titian, Veronese, and the best colourists of the Venetian school. This principle, therefore,

upon which the hot and cold colours of a picture are arranged, has its foundation in nature; has the practice of the best colourists to sanction our adopting it, and therefore may be safely recommended to the student.

In many pictures of the Dutch school we see a perfect harmony sustained between the hot and cold colours of a picture; and the warm colour contained in the foreground, and strong darks wove into the masses of neutral tint in a multiplicity of ways. To focus the warm colour of the ground, we often find figures dressed in red, withered leaves, bark of trees, pieces of brick, &c. made use of, and trace it insinuating itself into the colder colour by a variety of channels. The cool tints of the sky and distance we find diffused by the gray colour of wood, stems of trees, gray road, or water taking on the reflection of the sky. In many of the works of Richard Wilson and Gainsborough we see the richest effects of colour produced by this mode of arrangement; using the middle ground as a ground of union between the warm and cold colours.

In extending the light of a picture, a gradual influence seems necessary to be kept up in the surrounding objects; whether it be that the eye, from being attracted to the principal light in the first instance, receives an impression which prejudices it in favour of those tones approximating to such colour as the principal light is composed of; and is therefore more gently drawn off by lights of the same hue; which in their turn gradually subside in others of a less influenced quality: or that a union really exists in nature from objects receiving a tinge of that colour of which the principal light is composed (which, in many cases, we know to be the fact, such as in sunset and midday), or both of these causes operating on our mind, it is difficult to determine; but we often see, where this chain of union is broken by the introduction of colours of an opposite nature to the light, that a harshness of effect is produced, for which nothing can compensate.

Mengs expresses himself well when he talks of the colouring of light and shade; for what is colouring, if it is to destroy the great breadth of

which they are the foundation? Colour, therefore, ought to be used only to strengthen the effects of light and shade; or rather, perhaps, it ought to take precedence, and light and shade be called in to support the splendid effects of colour.

Strong colours and light seem incompatible; for though in nature light renders colours more bright, yet it detaches the light parts of figures (even though dressed in blue or black) from the most delicate background. This may be observed on looking at objects placed between the spectator and the sun. One of the many difficulties, therefore, with which the artist has to contend is to represent the rotundity of objects composed of strong local colour. In the earlier masters we find the figures possessing a flat inlaid appearance, with the lights strongly charged with local colour; in the next advances of the art we find the light part of figures kept nearly white, though clothed in strong coloured draperies; which we even perceive in many of the pictures of Raphael, such as his Transfiguration, &c. till at length we find the strong colouring of Georgioni, and the delicate light of Coreggio, combined in the works of Titian; who has united the severity of the earliest masters with the softest effects of nature. Coreggio was the first to attend particularly to the influence of aerial perspective, and to preserve the breadth of light and shade undisturbed by colour; and in this he has been followed by Rembrandt and Reynolds. His lights are much impasted with white, over which are laid colours of the most delicate nature, or semi-transparent washes, which permit the ground to shine through, giving a luminous effect; or tints in which a considerable portion of white is mixed: thus preserving the rotundity of his figures, while his shadows are filled with a juicy vehicle, in which transparent particles of rich warm colour are floating; thereby leading the light into the darkest masses, without its being refracted from the surface. This property of the illuminated parts to give back the light, and the absorption of it in the shadow, Coreggio may have learned in studying his models by lamplight; as his breadth of light and shade leads us to suppose was his practice. Reynolds advises, " for the sake of

harmony, the colours, however distinguished in their light, should be nearly the same in the shadows of a

> " simple unity of shade,
> As all were from one single palette spread."

This, however, must be done with caution, as we find in nature and the best colourists exceptions in the shadows of many of the colours. For instance, in the shadows of red we find the local colour preserved more strongly than in the shadows of other colours; and white, when warm in the light, is cool in the shadow. When the mass of shadow is warm, the introduction of some dark blue or cool black will be of service to clear it up, and give it air; while the introduction of red will often focus the warm colours, and give them richness, with more appearance of truth. I may also notice here that nothing gives a more natural look than preserving the local colours of the objects in shadow, provided they are not too light to disturb the breadth; for they give clearness and precision, and that particular relation which one colour bears to another; for in shadow the colours have not the property of communicating their reflections to one another, whereas in the strong light the rays are refracted from each colour, tinging the whole with an harmonious union.

Distinctness of local colour, and precision of outline, are the peculiar character of objects placed out of the effect of strong light. In sunshine, from the objects refracting the light, the outline is full and soft, surrounded by tones of an indistinct nature. In Rembrandt we find particular attention paid to the effects of light upon colour, which his rough manner of using the colours not a little contributes to give. Sir Joshua seems to have constantly contemplated this bathing of his colour in the splendour of sunshine; and if he has given us an English translation of the works of Titian unimpaired, it is from his having made use of the Dutch version. That brilliancy of colour in the lights of Sir Joshua's pictures; the mixed chaotic hue made use of to give it value; that diffusion by means of carrying one colour into another, such as touching

in the white with yellow tints, working in the yellow with red touches, and hemming in the red with a black of a cool tone, so as to make even the shadows partake of the influence of light, thereby preserving the greatest breadth of chiaroscuro, are the peculiar properties of Rembrandt. In Titian we have the white drapery more distinct from the flesh tint than in Rembrandt and Reynolds; in whose pictures the luminous character of the flesh seems to shed its influence upon the lights of the white drapery, and tinges its gray shadows with a blush of yellow. This extending of the light by means of colour is, therefore, the mode of combining both, and is to be found in nature and the best colourists. In a sketch of Rembrandt's (formerly in the Luxembourg) of "Christ and the Disciples at Emmaus," he has placed the figure of Christ in the centre, in white, with a glory of stars; while one of the disciples is clothed in yellow, and the other in red: from which we may gather some idea of his treatment of light. In Cuyp we often find the same arrangement diffusing his delicate pearly tints about his strong light. In nature, such as in sunset, we find the delicate aerial tints gaining ground, and showing themselves where the light passes into the strong colours; thereby imbuing them with its effects. I have often thought Rubens's advice in painting flesh founded upon this principle. "Paint your high lights white; place next to it yellow, then red, using darker red as it passes into the shadow; then with a brush filled with cool gray pass gently over the whole, until they are tempered and sweetened to the tone you wish." As flesh is of a smooth nature, we find the pearly reflections play upon the surface, and are more evident where the colours are the tenderest. In his compositions of many figures we find him adopt the same principle in conducting the light across the picture; for example, in the "Battle of the Amazons," the principal light is on the white horse dappled with gray, and diffused by touches of cool colours; the yellow tints of the mane, &c. carry it on to the flesh of the figure in advance, who is naked for the sake of spreading the light; then comes a drapery of strong red: the horse adjoining is a warm dun colour; the next is rich brown,

carrying on the light into the shadow, which is focused by a black surrounded by transparent rich tones; thus adding rich and warm colours to the light, as it spreads itself into the shadow side of the picture: to balance which he has given the amazon, who is turning round with a spear in her hand, a red drapery; and, to repeat the cool tints in the shadow side, he has given the female lying in the water a green dress, and spread it by a few sedges of the same colour. We, therefore, see the same principle pervading the works of different artists, from the glowing sunshine of Titian and Rembrandt to the fresher and cooler tones of P. Veronese and Rubens.

Before proceeding to investigate the different arrangements of colour in the sketches which follow, I shall endeavour to make myself more clearly understood, that the student may be better able to perceive what is placed before him; and, for his more readily doing so, he ought to understand what he is in search of; as nothing is more vague than the word colouring, either as applied to the works of nature or those of art. Reynolds says, "The striking distinction between the works of the Roman, Bolognian, and Venetian schools consists more in that general effect which is produced by colours than in the more profound excellences of the art. At least, it is from thence that each is distinguished and known at first sight.

"Grandeur of effect is produced by two different ways, which seem entirely opposed to each other. One is, by reducing the colours to little more than chiaroscuro, which was often the practice of the Bolognian school; and the other, by making the colours very distinct and forcible, such as we see in those of Rome and Florence; but still the presiding principle of both those manners is simplicity. Certainly nothing can be more simple than monotony; and the distinct blue, red, and yellow colours which are seen in the draperies of the Roman and Florentine schools, though they have not that kind of harmony which is produced by a variety of broken and transparent colours, have that effect of grandeur which was intended. Perhaps these distinct colours strike the mind

more forcibly, from there not being any great union between them; as martial music, which is intended to rouse the nobler passions, has its effect from the sudden and strongly marked transitions from one note to another, which that style of music requires; whilst in that which is intended to move the softer passions, the notes imperceptibly melt into one another."

"Next to these (viz. the Roman, the Florentine, and Bolognian schools) we may rank the Venetian, together with the Flemish and the Dutch schools; all professing to depart from the great purposes of painting, and catching at applause by inferior qualities. I am not ignorant that some will censure me for placing the Venetians in this inferior class, and many of the warmest admirers of painting will think them unjustly degraded; but I wish not to be misunderstood. Though I can by no means allow them to hold any rank with the nobler schools of painting, they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, as they seem more willing to dazzle than to affect, it can be no injury to them to suppose that their practice is useful only to its proper end. But what may heighten the elegant may degrade the sublime. There is a simplicity, and, I may add, severity, in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with this comparatively sensual style."

"Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than to be admired for their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art which, as I before observed, the higher style requires its followers to conceal." Further,

"However great the difference is between the composition of the Venetian and the rest of the Italian schools, there is full as great a disparity in the effect of their pictures as produced by colours. And though in this respect the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style. Their colouring is not only too brilliant, but, I will

venture to say, too harmonious, to produce that solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect, which heroic subjects require, and which simple or grave colours only can give to a work."

We from these passages may therefore find that colouring, as applied to the art of painting, is to be conducted upon different principles according to the character of the work in hand, as that which would be applicable to one style would in some measure be destructive of another. The student can know these distinctions only by examining the works carefully of the several schools wherein they exist; and though the works may not be in the particular department in which his pencil is engaged, he may rest assured that the lowest branches of the art will derive a strength and grace from an acquaintance with those principles which regulate the higher and more sublime. This infusion of the great style into their own was the constant object of the Bolognian and Venetian schools; the Caracci, the great founders of the first, speaking of Michael Angelo, style him Nostro Michael Angelo Riformato; and Tintoretto inscribed upon the walls of his painting room "Il designo di Michel Angiolo, e il colorito di Titiano." Reynolds says, "They (viz. the Venetians) certainly much advanced the dignity of their style by adding to their fascinating powers of colouring something of the strength of Michael Angelo; at the same time it may still be a doubt how far their ornamental elegance would be an advantageous addition to his grandeur. But if there is any manner of painting which may be said to unite kindly with his style, it is that of Titian: his handling, the manner in which his colours are left on the canvass, appears to proceed, as far as it goes, from a congenial mind, equally disdainful of vulgar criticism." In the same way was the simple grandeur of Raffaelle, or the sublimity of Michael Angelo, infused into the Flemish school by the taste of Rubens, however much deteriorated from its having passed through the medium of the Venetian school, from whence he imbibed it. "In pursuing this great art, it must be acknowledged that we labour under greater difficulties than those who were born in the age of its discovery, and whose

minds, from their infancy, were habituated to this style; who learned it as language, as their mother tongue. They had no mean taste to unlearn; they needed no persuasive discourse to allure them to a favourable reception of it; no abstruse investigation of its principles to convince them of the great latent truths on which it is founded. We are constrained, in these later days, to have recourse to a sort of grammar and dictionary, as the only means of recovering a dead language. It was by them learned by rote, and perhaps better learned that way than by precept." Equally vague with the phrase of "the colouring of the great masters" is the phrase of "the colouring of nature." "Look at nature," say the critics; "nature is the true school of art," is in the mouth of every one: but the art of seeing nature is only to be learned by the contemplation of the works of art. "If our judgment," says Sir Joshua, "is to be directed by narrow, vulgar, untaught, or rather ill taught reason, we must prefer a portrait by Denner, or any other high finisher, to those of Titian or Vandyck; and a landscape of Vanderheyden to those of Titian or Rubens, for they are certainly more exact representations of nature. If we suppose a view of nature represented with all the truth of the camera obscura, and the same scene represented by a great artist, how little and mean will the one appear in comparison of the other, when no superiority is supposed from the choice of the subject." Again Reynolds says, "Amongst the painters and the writers on painting, there is one maxim universally admitted and continually inculcated. Imitate nature is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood: the consequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense, that objects are represented naturally when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered that, if the excellence of a painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to poetry, this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in

which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the art to claim kindred with poetry, but its powers over the imagination? To this power the painter of genius directs his aim; in this sense he studies nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural in the confined sense of the word. The grand style of painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of poetry from that of history. Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterise history; but the very being of poetry consists in departing from this plain narration, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination. To desire to see the excellences of each style united, to mingle the Dutch with the Italian school, is to join contrarieties which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other. The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth, and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say of nature modified by accident. The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness, so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, that ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other." These remarks show that it is always necessary for the student to bear in mind the nature of any of the works of art which he investigates; what is to be learned from them, and how far such principles as they exhibit are founded upon truth, either when viewing nature upon broad general ideas, or when investigating the little intricacies of the detail in painting.

PLATE III.

Fig. 1 Represents the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian. Reynolds says, "The conduct of Titian in this picture has been much celebrated, and justly, for the harmony of colouring. To Ariadne is given (say the

Fig. 1.

Titian.

Fig. 2.

Titian.

London, Published by James Carpenter & Son, Old Bond Street, 1827.

critics) a red scarf, to relieve the figure from the sea, which is behind her. It is not for that reason alone, but for another of much greater consequence; for the sake of the general harmony and effect of the picture. The figure of Ariadne is separated from the great group, and is dressed in blue, which, added to the colour of the sea, makes that quantity of cold colour which Titian thought necessary for the support and brilliancy of the great group; which group is composed, with very little exception, entirely of mellow colours. But as the picture in this case would be divided into two distinct parts, one half cold, and the other warm, it was necessary to carry some of the mellow colours of the great group into the cold part of the picture, and a part of the cold into the great group; accordingly Titian gave Ariadne a red scarf, and to one of the Bacchante a little blue drapery." If a diagonal line be drawn across the picture, we find the picture composed of a mass of hot and a mass of cold colours, laid out upon the broadest scale, and aiding each other by their opposition. The blue is carried into the warm mass by a little blue drapery, and a few blue flowers at the bottom of the picture; the next approach from the cool to the warm colours is by green, produced by the green of the distance and the trees; and is carried on to the figures by the wreaths of vine tendrils, &c. and repeated by the grass at the bottom. The warm colour is brought up against the cool ground by the drapery of Bacchus, which is of a lake colour, and the scarf of Ariadne of a strong red; which latter coming in contact with her blue drapery, attracts the eye by its harsh opposition, this figure being the point from which the action of the picture emanates. We find in this arrangement not only the greatest breadth of colour, but also such colour laid out in the general appearance of nature. When we compare Titian with other colourists, we find in his tones a greater truth and sweetness, his deepest brown shadows never appear black, his reds have a less harsh appearance from their being less positive, his green colours less violent, possessing more tone either of a brown or gray hue, and his

deepest blues truer to the colouring of nature in extreme distances, or in the deep blue of the sky, or in distant sea.

Plate III. *Fig.* 2. In this picture, "The Entombment of Christ," we perceive the same broad principle of colour. The cool colour is carried into the warm by means of the green dress of the figure kneeling; and it is extended by the lining of the dress of the figure on the opposite side. Titian has also given this figure a scarf of a cool gray. The warm colour is brought up against the cool by the red dress of St. John, and the yellow dress and hair of the Magdalen. We may here notice the union of the yellow of the Magdalen's dress and the blue of the mother's dress, in producing a green as a medium, and the red dress of St. John finding a repetition in the more delicate red of the servant's dress. The dark green dress of Joseph serves as a shadow to the white drapery of Christ; and the strong red of St. John's dress gives the body of Christ a cold deathlike appearance. Titian often has his red placed near the centre of his picture, which gives it consequence, and he either throws it into much light, or keeps it flat, according as he wishes it to tell as a dark or light in his scale of chiaroscuro. Mengs supposes Titian to have used colours more or less retiring upon his figures according to their situation. Such is not, however, his principle; and strong colours are more often used by him to support his composition, without any reference to their being employed upon the most prominent points. From Raffaelle to Rubens we often find them introduced upon background figures, as a dark in light pictures, and a light in dark ones; sometimes carrying the eye to the point of attraction, or for the purpose of clearing up the shadows. We often find portions of deep lake dresses running into the dark masses of Tintoretto and P. Veronese; and we know, the more a picture is made out by colour, the lighter the effect will be, and the nearer allied to the appearance of nature in open daylight.

I have noticed in another place the toning down of colours to the

general hue most commonly presented to the eye, as being not only the most agreeable to the spectator from habit, but equally applicable to the great historical style, from its giving an appearance of truth and reality. Laying out the subject in large masses of hot and cold colours, carrying them boldly into the provinces of each other, blending the warm light with the rich warm shadow, by means of introducing decided dark blues, thereby producing a union and splendour over the whole, are amongst some of the leading features of Titian's works, and are founded upon principles existing in nature, when under the influence of sunshine.

"It is to Titian," says Reynolds, "we must turn our eyes to find excellence with regard to colour, and light and shade in the highest degree. He was both the first and the greatest master of this art. By a few strokes he knew how to mark the general image and character of whatever object he attempted; and produced, by this alone, a truer representation than his master Giovanni Bellino, or any of his predecessors, who finished every hair. His great care was to express the general colour, to preserve the masses of light and shade, and to give by opposition the idea of that solidity which is inseparable from natural objects. When those are preserved, though the work should possess no other merit, it will have in a proper place its complete effect; but where any of these are wanting, however minutely laboured the picture may be in the detail, the whole will have a false, and even an unfinished appearance, at whatever distance or in whatever light it can be shown.

"It is vain to attend to the variation of tints, if, in that attention, the general hue of flesh is lost; or, to finish ever so minutely the parts, if the masses are not observed, or the whole not well put together.

"Vasari seems to have had no great disposition to favour the Venetian painters, yet he every where justly commends *il modo di fare, la miniera, la bella pratica*; that is, the admirable manner and practice of that school. On Titian in particular he bestows the epithets of *giudicioso, bello, e stupendo.*

"This manner was then new to the world, but that unshaken truth on

which it is founded has fixed it as a model to all succeeding painters; and those who will examine into the artifice will find it to consist in the power of generalizing, and in the shortness and simplicity of the means employed."

"Many artists," as Vasari likewise observes, "have ignorantly imagined they are imitating the manner of Titian, when they leave their colours rough, and neglect the detail; but, not possessing the principles on which he wrought, they have produced what he calls *goffe pitture*, absurd foolish pictures; for such will always be the consequence of affecting dexterity without science, without selection, and without fixed principles."

PLATE IV.

Fig. 1. In this subject, A holy Family with St. Francis, St. Catherine, St. John, and St. Jerome, we have the warm and rich colours kept on the dark side of the picture. The cool colour, commencing in the sky, is spread over the shadows of the architecture and gray dress of St. Francis, and collected in the dark blue of the Virgin's dress, which is brought in contact with the strongest red, viz. the upper part of the dress of St. Jerome, which latter is diffused by the softer colour in his under garment, carried into the picture by the reddish marble inlaid in the altar and on the pavement, and carried upwards by the dress of the Virgin. The brown yellow dress of Joseph is spread by means of the rich brocade behind the figures. Whether Veronese thought the yellow and blue required a green to be present, or from whatever other cause, he has given a little of that colour to the lining of the Virgin's dress. Perhaps, from the same reasoning, or, to repeat the purple dress of Joseph, he has given a purple tinge to the drapery (supported by a cherub), reflected from the blue and red dress of the Virgin.

In considering the chiaroscuro of this picture, we find (as is often the

Fig. 1.

P. Veronese.

Fig. 2.

Titian.

London, Published by James Carpenter & Son, Old Bond Street, 1827.

case in P. Veronese) the lights kept tender, and less charged with strong colour than the shadow side, which is made up of strong blue, reds, brown, yellow, and blacks; the brown hair of St. Catherine, the olive-green branch, and book of St. Francis being the only colours which tell upon the light side. He has brought the strong light of the lower group (viz. the shoulder and arm of St. John, and the book of St. Jerome) in contact with the strong dark of the upper group, produced by the dark blue dress of the Virgin, which is carried into the lower part of the picture by means of the black marble inlaid in the altar, and into the upper by means of the strong darks in the tapestry.

Some artists have been at a loss to account for the harsh darks in the upper part of the picture, as it is in a manner the background to the upper group. Perhaps the introduction of them was for the purpose of drawing the attention to such part of the composition; or it may have been the identical tapestry used in decorating the church on festival days; as we often see the Venetian painters introducing the architecture and local circumstances of Venice. Thus the bright blue skies and sea, the dazzling light clouds and buildings, the variegated marbles, and draperies of black or crimson velvet, which we find introduced in their works, are to be traced to this source. I cannot here refrain from noticing the high opinion entertained by Barry of P. Veronese, as his lectures contain some excellent remarks; and though they are not so much known as those of Reynolds, yet in many instances they may be read as an antidote to some of the doctrines even of his more fortunate predecessor. We cannot but regret the direction given to Barry's studies, and must consider him one of those noble minds ruined by a close adherence to the dry manner of the early masters.

In his lecture upon colour, he says, "Paul Veronese is an example which I would hold out to you with much more pleasure; for the whole economy and practical conduct of a picture no man is more worthy your attention. His tints of colour, though often not equal in value to those of Titian, are however equally true, and necessarily much more variegated,

from the greater extent of his subjects. He has shown a most exquisite sensibility in according his almost endless variety of broken tints with the portions of pure vivid colour which accompany them; and the harmony resulting from all those variegated masses of colour, together with the light, easy, graceful, spiritual manner in which the whole is conducted, leaves nothing further to be wished for in this part of the art.

"In this school, then, is to be found all that can be desired respecting the scientific, necessary conduct to be employed in the colouring of a picture. In colouring, the Venetians were select and ideal, and have proceeded with a finesse and management quite the reverse of the conduct they adopted in the other parts of the art. Whilst those of the other schools of Italy, who had availed themselves of the ideal respecting design and composition, have been equally defective in not pursuing the same selection in the chiaroscuro of their colours."

In comparing Titian with P. Veronese, the first great difference which strikes us is the general warmth which seems diffused over the works of the former. Titian's objects are represented under the influence of an evening sky, when the white atmosphere is filled with yellow rays of the setting sun, swallowing up the little differences of colour in one broad universal splendour. The works of Veronese possess the freshness of morn when the dewy moisture spreads a delicate veil over the scene, and every object glitters with pearls; or when they give out the insufferable brightness of midday in contact with masses of clear blue sky.

This difference in the general look of their pictures pervades the most minute parts of the composition. We seek in vain, in the works of Titian, for those delicate gray tones which we see in the flesh of Veronese: in Titian they are absorbed in one general rich glaze; in Veronese the grays of the architecture, the shadows of the white drapery, and of the clouds, &c. all partake of freshness and delicacy, having a resemblance to the tender tints in size colour; while in Titian they assume an appearance of the same tints washed over with a glazing of transparent yellow. That they both reached perfection in their works may

be reasonably concluded, from the superiority they still hold above all those who have worked upon the same principles.

The nearest approach to Titian is found in the works of Tintoretto, particularly in his famous picture of the "Miracle of St. Mark," which is a splendid combination of the rich tones of Titian with the more fresh colouring of Veronese; and could we suppose it placed between two of their most famous works, viz. the "Peter Martyr" of Titian and the "Martyrdom of St. George" of Veronese, I am confident the one would appear too hot, and the other too cold. If any picture deserves the name of the triumph of painting, it is this work; in the presence of which, when in the Louvre, even the "Transfiguration" of Raffaelle looked cold and academic.

Why Sir Joshua should caution the student against imbibing the manner of this artist, I cannot understand; for Michael Angelo, Tintoretto, S. Rosa, and Rubens seem to have been born for the art of painting.

Plate IV. *Fig.* 2. The colours of this picture commencing with St. Peter are the following. His dress is composed of strong blue and yellow; the blue is repeated upon the upper dress of the Virgin, and carried up into the sky; the yellow is spread by means of the embroidery on the flag of St. George, and a few gold bars on the figure in white in the opposite corner, and suffused over the clouds and architecture; they are united and broke into the harmony of the picture by the green cloth of the altar, by the lights of the dark figure kneeling being of a greenish tone, and the dull green dresses of the opposite figures partly seen. The principal red is the flag of St. George, carried across the picture by the dress of the Virgin, and the large mass of dull lake on the figure kneeling, the reddish dress of the servant behind the saint, a red binding to the upper dress of the dark figure on his knees, and a small part of the red dress seen opposite, break it into the general mass. The warm gray dress of St. Francis brings down the colour of the architecture into the group; and the black armour of St. George makes a mass with

the figure upon his knees, and is carried up by some bars of the arms upon the flag. The white is produced by the veil of the Virgin, the book of St. Peter, the white turban, a scroll upon the flag, and the white dress of the figure in the lower corner of the picture.

Though there are few pictures of Titian where a multitude of figures are introduced, such as we see in those of Paul Veronese, yet we can gather sufficient from his works to give us a correct idea of his arrangement of colour in such subjects, and must conclude that Veronese extended the principles of his master over subjects of a more complicated character by the same means, viz. a spreading out of the colours in large masses, breaking them down by others of the same hue, but less positive, and distributing his hot and cold colours in a judicious manner through the picture. As this is the picture mentioned by Reynolds as an example of grandeur and simplicity arising out of the regularity of composition, I shall here give his remarks, which will place them more before the student's observation than a reference to the pages where they occur. "Here the Virgin and child are placed on an altar instead of a pedestal; St. Peter, with an open book, leaning on the altar, and looking at St. George and another figure which is kneeling. On the other side is St. Francis, looking up to Christ, and recommending to his protection a noble Venetian, with four other figures, who are on their knees. Nothing can exceed the simplicity and dignity of these figures. They are drawn in profile, looking straight forward in the most natural manner, without any contrast or affectation of attitude whatever. The figure on the other side is likewise in profile and kneeling; which, while it gives an air of formality to the picture, adds also to its grandeur and simplicity. This must be acknowledged to be above Rubens; that is, I fear he would have renounced it, had it occurred. Rubens's manner is often too artificial and picturesque for the *grand style*. Titian knew very well that so much formality or regularity, as to give the appearance of being above all the tricks of art, which we call picturesque, is of itself grandeur. There is a quiet dignity in the composition of Titian, and an animation

and bustle in that of Rubens; one is splendid, the other is grand and majestic. These two pictures may be considered among the best works of those great painters, and each characterizes its respective author. They may, therefore, be properly opposed to each other, and compared together.

"I confess I was so overpowered with the brilliancy of this picture of Rubens, whilst I was before it, and under its fascinating influence, that I thought I had never before seen so great powers exerted in the art. It was not till I was removed from its influence that I could acknowledge any inferiority in Rubens to any other painter whatever.

"The composition of Titian is of that kind which leaves the middle space void, and the figures are ranged around it. In this space is the white linen that covers the altar; and it is for the sake of this white linen, I apprehend, that he has made an altar instead of a pedestal, in order to make the linen the principal light, which is about the middle of the picture. The second light is the Virgin, and Christ, and the heads of the figures."

The remarks regarding the effect of this picture Reynolds must have made with the print of Le Febre before him, as in it the altar cloth appears white, whereas in the picture it is of a dull green. There is a splendour in the print which a breadth of light always conveys; but, keeping the cloth of a tone produced by the blue and yellow of St. Peter seems to harmonize these colours with the picture, and gives it a greater solidity of effect. We must, however, allow that keeping the cloth white is conformable to the practice of Titian and Veronese, and in the print there is no indication of a fringe, which is in the picture; yet we cannot suppose, with the high character Titian holds in Venice, that any alteration in the picture would have been permitted, for the purpose of making the Virgin and child more principal. The strongest point of light is brought in contact with the strongest dark in the book which comes against the dark dress of St. Peter, and is next taken up by the white veil of the Virgin, and is carried up by the light in the sky to the upper part of the

picture. In the lower part the light is carried across by the steps and the figure with the white dress. Perhaps, were the altar cloth white, the light in the upper part, and that in the under part of the picture, would be too much united.

As nothing has given rise to greater uncertainty than the proper degree of detail and style of colour to be used in subjects of an heroic nature, it will be necessary in this place to draw the student's attention to the subject. From the earliest specimens of painting which have been discovered in Egypt and Herculaneum, we find colours used indiscriminately, and without regard to harmony; reds, blues, and yellows put down as mere ornament, or perhaps symbolically, and such as we find now in uncultivated nations. As the arts advanced, we find painting keeping pace with poetry and sculpture; and though from the remains of the two latter we can form a more correct opinion of their excellence than of painting, as all remains of this art are destroyed, we are nevertheless able to gather something from contemporary authors and analogy of reasoning, which, if rightly considered, will lead us to pretty just conclusions. Apelles and Zeuxis are mentioned as two of the greatest painters at a time when Greece was in her glory; and as the fragments of Phidias prove that its sculptors aimed at a true representation of nature, we may infer that painting took the same direction; especially as many anecdotes respecting the Grecian painters confirm us in such supposition. For example, when we are told Apelles altered even the tying of a sandal to accord with truth, and that the birds attempted to peck at some grapes Zeuxis had painted, we may conclude that detail, and colouring true to nature, were amongst some of their excellences. Reynolds, in his notes to Du Fresnoy, says, " There can be no doubt but that the same correctness of design was required from the painter as from the sculptor; and if what has happened in the case of sculpture had likewise happened in regard to their paintings, and we had the good fortune to possess what the ancients themselves esteemed their masterpieces, I have no doubt but we should find their figures as correctly drawn as the Laocoon, and probably coloured like

Titian. What disposes me to think higher of their colouring than any remains of ancient painting will warrant, is the account which Pliny gives of the mode of operation used by Apelles; that over his finished picture he spread a transparent liquid like ink, of which the effect was to give brilliancy, and at the same time to lower the too great glare of the colour: 'Quod absoluta opera atramento illinebat ita tenui, ut id ipsum repercussu claritates colorum excitaret; et cum ratione magna, ne colorum claritas oculorum aciem offenderet.' This passage, though it may possibly perplex the critics, is a true and an artist-like description of the effects of glazing or scumbling, such as was practised by Titian and the rest of the Venetian painters. This custom, or mode of operation, implies at least a true taste of that in which the excellence of colouring consists; which does not proceed from fine colours, but true colours; from breaking down these fine colours, which would appear too raw, to a deep-toned brightness."

From these short observations we may conclude that possessing a portion of detail, and a natural style of colouring, was considered necessary by the ancients.

From the revival of painting in the thirteenth century to its perfection in the fifteenth, we see a constant attention to these two objects; though with more or less success, according to the talents of the artists: and the works of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle seem in these respects carried as far as they were capable of carrying them. The detail in the foreground of the "Transfiguration" exhibits the scrupulous fidelity of Paul Potter. If, therefore, such detail and an attention to truth are found in the works of Raffaelle, why should we censure them in Titian, where, even in his "Peter Martyr," the detail partakes of a less laboured character? We may, therefore, consider a certain portion of detail necessary to give the work an appearance of truth. With respect to the harmony of colouring, as it invites the spectator's attention, and detains him, from the agreeable sensation it produces, it seems not only allowable but necessary. The

mind may be improved through the gratification of the eye, and the most sublime scenes represented, though clothed with the colouring of truth.

Reynolds, in his fourth Discourse, says, "However great the difference is between the composition of the Venetian and the rest of the Italian schools, there is full as great a disparity in the effect of their pictures as produced by colours. And though in this respect the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style. Their colouring is not only too brilliant, but, I will venture to say, too harmonious to produce that solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect which heroic subjects require, and which simple or grave colours only can give to a work. That they are to be cautiously studied by those who are ambitious of treading the great walk of history, is confirmed, if it wants confirmation, by the greatest of all authorities, Michael Angelo. This wonderful man, after having seen a picture by Titian, told Vasari, who accompanied him, 'that he liked much his colouring and manner;' but he added, 'that it was a pity the Venetian painters did not learn to draw correctly in their early youth, and adopt a better manner of study.'" And again,

"Though it be allowed that elaborate harmony of colouring, a brilliancy of tints, a soft and gradual transition from one to another, present to the eye what an harmonious concert of music does to the ear, it must be remembered that painting is not merely gratification of the sight. Such excellence, though properly cultivated, where nothing higher than elegance is intended, is weak and unworthy of regard, when the work aspires to grandeur and sublimity."

Yet twelve years afterwards, when his notes to Du Fresnoy were published, he makes use of the following observations, talking of Raffaelle and Julio Romano: "Though it would be far from an addition to the merit of those two great painters to have made their works deceptions, yet there can be no reason why they might not, in some degree, and with a judicious caution and selection, have availed themselves of many

excellences which are found in the Venetian, Flemish, and even Dutch schools, and which have been inculcated in this poem. There are some of them which are not in absolute contradiction to any style; the happy disposition, for instance, of light and shade; the preservation of breadth in masses of colours; the union of these with their grounds; and the harmony arising from a due mixture of hot and cold hues, with many other excellences not inseparably connected with that individuality which produces deception, would surely not counteract the effect of the grand style; they would only contribute to the ease of the spectator, by making the vehicle pleasing by which ideas are conveyed to the mind, which otherwise might be perplexed and bewildered with a confused assemblage of objects; they would add a certain degree of grace and sweetness to strength and grandeur. Though the merits of those two great painters are of such transcendency as to make us overlook their deficiency, yet a subdued attention to these inferior excellences must be added to complete the idea of a perfect painter."

And further, in his Tour through Flanders, noticing three pictures by Vandyck, he says, "In the next room are three admirable pictures by Vandyck; 'St. Sebastian,' 'Susanna,' and a 'Pieta.' The first two were done when he was very young, highly coloured, in the same manner as the 'Jupiter and Antiope' at Mr. Dasch's at Antwerp; a picture on the same subject, in the possession of Lord Coventry; his own portrait at the Duke of Grafton's; and the portrait of Rubens, in my possession. He never afterwards had so brilliant a manner of colouring; it kills every thing near it. Behind are figures on horseback, touched with great spirit. This is Vandyck's first manner, when he imitated Rubens and Titian, which supposes the sun in the room: in his pictures afterwards he represented the effects of common daylight; both were equally true to nature, but his first manner carries a superiority with it, and seizes our attention, whilst the pictures painted in his latter manner run a risk of being overlooked."

We may, from these conflicting opinions, suspect that Sir Joshua Reynolds himself had become a convert to the idea of Tintoretto, that the colouring of Titian might add a grace even to the design of Michael Angelo; but, be this as it may, the student can have no hesitation in endeavouring to follow this school in the splendid ranks of Velasquez, Rubens, Vandyck, Rembrandt, and even Reynolds himself, instead of adding another to the cold though classic files of Poussin, Le Seur, Le Brun, and Sebastian Bourdon. With the composition or expression of the Venetian school we have at present nothing to do; we are examining their mode of colouring, which may be said to possess brilliancy without gaudiness, solidity without harshness, truth without familiarity, and sweetness without insipidity; all conjoined in the greatest breadth of colour, overpowering every other work brought in competition with it. In historical works the draperies often make the largest portions of colour, and what in the first instance attracts the eye of the spectator. It is, therefore, necessary that the most applicable colours should be chosen, either from their appropriate quality, or with reference to the situation of the figure as regarding the chiaroscuro of the picture.

That colours have a tendency to give either grandeur or meanness, arising from their effect upon the eye, or from an association of ideas, no one will question. Primitive colours, or such as have great opposition to each other, seem to have been the first made use of. We read in Exodus of garments of blue, purple, and scarlet; which colours, either from their simplicity or forcible quality, have been employed by artists of all ages in painting draperies of sacred or noble characters. Colours also have a fitness according to the several personages represented. Thus we read of the azure zone of Venus, of the seagreen garments of Neptune, and the red mantle of Mars. The power of colour in conveying sentiment I have mentioned already in that part of this work which treats of the chiaroscuro. It may be seen in a variety of examples, from the murky sky that envelops the "Murder of Abel" by Titian, where all positive

colours are kept out of the picture, down to the "Tragic Muse" by Reynolds; where the pale and sad colours seem illuminated only by the yellow glare of the lightning.

Lavater, reasoning upon the effect of colour producing sad or pleasing sensations on the mind, endeavoured to establish a theory which should stamp an aversion to those things which were injurious to man; and endeavoured to prove that all poisonous plants and noxious reptiles were clothed with gloomy colours. Without discussing the truth or fallacy of his reasoning, we may safely assert that darkness of colour gives sadness, and that light and vivacity of colouring convey cheerfulness.

From the few fragments of early Greek paintings which have escaped the obliterating hand of time, we perceive a mode of managing the local colour of drapery, which was adopted at the revival of painting, and existed during the perfection of many of the schools, viz. leaving the light parts but faintly stained, and making use of the several colours for the shadows; thereby producing an effect of chiaroscuro by colour alone: while in those figures which were in shadow, or in the background, a flat wash of colour was made use of, that gave to the whole the appearance of a basso-relievo, wherein those parts are most rounded which most project. The introduction of aerial perspective into the art introduced at the same time an harmonious breadth and union of one tint with another: this led to a massing of the hot and cold colours; and in place of having a light blue inlaid upon a ground of a yellow or red, without any arrangement as to its union, it was surrounded by tints of a corresponding hue, and broke down and united with the ground, and harmonized into the other parts of the picture by a repetition of the same colour; and as the light parts of the composition became more charged with the local colour of the several objects, it became necessary to strengthen the dark masses to preserve the luminous character of the lights; and this, perhaps, gave rise to a unity of tone in the shadows.

Before proceeding to investigate how far the higher branches of the art contribute to the perfection of the inferior departments, it will be

necessary to inquire whether the grand style of painting can be improved by the addition of inferior qualities. The gratification and improvement of the mind from the contemplation of pictures must arise out of grandeur, novelty, or beauty. Addison says, "Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its capacity." This quality in the mind has given rise to the most stupendous conceptions, either for gratifying the caprice of one man, or leading captive the imaginations of thousands: it is to this sensation in the mind that we are indebted for many of the greatest works of art. "We are obliged," he adds, "to devotion for the noblest buildings that have adorned the several countries of the world: it is this which has set man at work on temples and public places of worship, not only that they might, by the magnificence of the building, invite the Deity to reside within it, but that such stupendous works might at the same time open the mind to vast conceptions, and fit it to converse with the Divinity of the place. For every thing that is majestic imprints an awfulness and reverence on the mind of the beholder, and strikes in with the natural greatness of the soul." It therefore followed, if statues and pictures were to be introduced for the purpose of increasing such emotions, that they should be of a grandeur to correspond with the magnitude of the building, both in dimensions and style. This has given rise to boldness in the design, simplicity in the attitudes, a continuity of the outline, and a spreading out of the masses of colour. Hence the superhuman conceptions of Michael Angelo, the awe-inspiring dignity of Raffaelle, and the breadth and magnificence of Titian and Paul Veronese.

What in another place would appear gigantic, there appears natural; what might be thought formal, there appears dignified; and what might be too harsh or dazzling in the colouring, is there subdued into a grand and harmonious union. By these component parts of one magnificent structure, the imagination is enlarged and extended. Colouring must either add to or diminish the effect of any work upon the imagination; it must add to it by increasing, or diminish it by destroying the deception.

The language in which the poet clothes imagery is not more necessary to its identity, than the colouring in the hands of the painter to the identity of the subject treated by him.

Addison, speaking of Shakspeare's language, says, "There is something so wild, and yet so solemn, in the speeches of ghosts, fairies, witches, and the like imaginary persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge of them, and must confess, if there are such beings in the world, it looks highly probable they should talk and act as he has represented them." This train of reasoning is applicable to painting in a high degree; and, by it, we may investigate the superior beings of Michael Angelo or his followers in the field of poetical imagery. Addison justly says, "We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination." We can form no idea of colouring beyond what has an existence in nature. From this source all our materials must be drawn: both sacred and profane writers have employed the same means. In the vision of Ezekiel, when describing even the glory of God, he compares the brightness as like "unto amber, with the appearance of a fire within it, and surrounding it, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain."

Michael Angelo and Raffaelle have both in the representation of the Deity personified him in the likeness of a man; not so much from our "having been created after his own image," as from the impossibility to conceive a grander idea of form and colour; if those representations have not the grandeur of colour which Titian could have imparted, it must be ascribed to their want of power in this branch of the art, either from fresco painting not admitting of such excellence, from the materials and the despatch necessary in finishing it, or from their studies being directed into another channel. Reynolds says, "Raffaelle and Titian seem to have looked at nature for different purposes: they both had the power of

extending their view to the whole; but one looked only for the general effect as produced by form, the other as produced by colour." And he adds: "If he (Raffaelle) had expressed his ideas with the facility and eloquence, as it may be called, of Titian, his works would certainly not have been less excellent, and that praise which ages and nations have poured out upon him for possessing genius in the higher attainments of art, would have been extended to them all." This naturalness in the tone of colour seems, therefore, equally applicable to the higher departments as the outline or the light and shade. There seems a certain identity necessary in representation, to give an appearance of reality of existence, and awaken those ideas in the mind consequent upon such appearance. The representation of beings like ourselves, in the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo, or the "Fall of the Damned," by Rubens, strikes us with more horror than if those beings were coloured with the etherial essence which Milton describes spirits to inherit.

If we descend lower into the regions of fiction and allegory, this truth of representation is still more essential, as in many respects it conveys the images more strongly to the mind; for example, the Satyrs, Silenuses, and Fawns of Rubens seem as if they had actually existed, so true to reality do they appear in all that constitutes the sensual, unrestrained, and bad passions of human nature when bereft of every thing mental; while in Poussin the cold formality of the antique, the dryness in colouring, and the absence of that juicy luscious character throughout, clothe them with chastity, and chill the imagination. Even with these few hints, perhaps, the student will be able to continue the train of reasoning which places colouring in so prominent a situation. The necessary detail must depend upon the subject in hand; for the artist must never forget that the mind is composed of ideas received from early impressions, from perceptions frequently occurring, and from reflections founded on such perceptions. Painting can reach the mind only through the medium of the eye, which must be gratified sufficiently to interest it in the communication.

If the student keeps this steadily in view, he will see that there can be

no danger in his adopting a natural and harmonious style of colouring: as by such means he will add a more captivating manner to the most sublime walks of painting.

Reynolds says, "Poussin, whose eye was always steadily fixed upon the sublime, has been often heard to say, 'that a particular attention to colouring was an obstacle to the student in his progress to the great end and design of the art, and that he who attaches himself to this principal end will acquire by practice a reasonable good method of colouring.'" What sort of practice is here meant I cannot say; but, unless the student begins early to colour from objects in nature, and habituates himself to examine well coloured pictures with attention, his eye never will acquire a good method of colouring. Of all branches of the art, colouring is the least mechanical. The eye may be taught to measure with great accuracy the distance from one point to another, and the particular form of an object as bounded by lines; but colouring is a matter of much greater subtilty, as the shades which separate one tint from another are not only less tangible, but seem less under the control of the eye, even though the mind is conscious of what constitutes good colouring.

Addison says, "The fancy delights in every thing great, strange, or beautiful; and is still more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, as the pleasure arises from more than a single principle. The figure of the rainbow does not contribute less to its magnificence than the colours to its beauty: colour is, therefore, an addition to the grandeur of an object. Among these several kinds of beauty, the eye takes most delight in colours: we nowhere meet with a more glorious or pleasing show in nature than what appears in the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun, which is wholly made up of these different stains of light, that show themselves in clouds of a different situation." Further, he says, "Things would make but a poor appearance to the eye, if we saw them only in their proper figures and motions; and what reason can we assign for their exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the objects themselves (for such are light and colours), were it not to add super-

numerary ornaments to the universe, and make it more agreeable to the imagination? We are everywhere entertained with pleasing shows and apparitions? we discover imaginary glories in the heavens and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole creation; but what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish?"

PLATE V.

Fig. 1. The colours of this subject, viz. a sketch of the "Good Samaritan," by Rembrandt, are yellow, brown, red, and black, tempered with masses of cool grey. In a work of this kind, it is impossible to give any idea of the manner of Rembrandt's arrangement of colour; as it arises out of his excellence of tone more than his placing of the several colours.

Fig. 2 is "The Prince of Orange going out in the Morning," by Cuyp. The principal light is composed of yellowish white and cool grey; the mass of shadow, of warm brown; the green dress of the servant, repeated by some leaves, serves as a medium to unite them, and acts as a foil to the dress of the Prince, which is strong red. The warm colour is led into the shadow by the brown horse, and pink saddlecloth of the servant in a dark dress, and repeated by the pink feather; the brown is repeated upon the sleeves of the servant's green dress, and spots upon the dog. The blacks are kept very decided, which is generally the practice of Cuyp, in order to give clearness and lightness of effect to the whole. He has brought a small portion of the dark group cutting against the sky, and the strongest light sharp off the dark. The grey colour of the sky and horse gives the red great value, as does also the presence of the green. Many artists object to the opposition arising from red and green,

Fig. 2.

Rembrandt.

A. Cuyp.

Fig. 3.

Rubens.

London, Published by J. Carpenter & Son Old Bond Street 1827.

as being too violent; but this may arise from the green not being sufficiently of a neutral tone.

Plate V. *Fig.* 3. represents "The Descent from the Cross," by Rubens. Reynolds remarks, speaking of this subject, "The composition of this picture is said to be borrowed from an Italian print: this print I never saw; but those who have seen it say, that Rubens has made no deviation from it, except in the attitude of the Magdalen. On the print is written, 'Peter Passer invenit; Hieronymus Wirix sculpsit.'

"The greatest peculiarity of this composition is the contrivance of the white sheet, on which the body of Jesus lies: this circumstance was probably what induced Rubens to adopt the composition. He well knew what effect white linen opposed to flesh must have, with his powers of colouring; a circumstance which was not likely to enter into the mind of an Italian painter, who probably would have been afraid of the linen's hurting the colouring of the flesh, and have kept it down of a low tint. And the truth is, that none but great colourists can venture to paint pure white linen near flesh; but such know the advantage of it: so that possibly what was stolen by Rubens, the possessor knew not how to value; and certainly no person knew so well as Rubens how to use. After all, this may perhaps turn out another Lauder's detection of plagiarism. I could wish to see this print, if there is one, to ascertain how far Rubens was indebted to it for his Christ, which I consider as one of the finest figures that ever was invented; it is most correctly drawn, and, I apprehend, in an attitude of the utmost difficulty to execute. The hanging of the head on his shoulder, and the falling of the body on one side, give such an appearance of the heaviness of death, that nothing can exceed it."

The celebrated work of Daniel di Volterra (which, from its receiving the assistance of Michael Angelo, had acquired great celebrity), is perhaps the picture from which Rubens obtained his idea, as the two works resemble each other in several particulars.

"Of the three Maries, two of them have more beauty than he generally bestowed on female figures, but no great elegance of character. The

St. Joseph of Arimathea is the same countenance which he so often introduced in his works; a smooth fat face,—a very unhistorical character. The principal light is formed by the body of Christ and the white sheet; there is no second light which bears any proportion to the principal: in this respect it has more the manner of Rembrandt's disposition of light than any other of Rubens's works; however, there are many little detached lights distributed at some distance from the great mass, such as the head and shoulders of the Magdalen, the heads of the two Maries, the head of St. Joseph, and the back and arm of the figure leaning over the cross; the whole surrounded with a dark sky, except a little light in the horizon, and above the cross."

Rubens has given great brilliancy to his light by bringing his strongest dark in contact with it in the most cutting manner; and he has supported it by a mass of strong red in the dress of St. John, which colour is repeated in the other side by the red cap of Joseph of Arimathea, and by the blood on the hand and arm of Christ, &c. The Mother is dressed in dark blue, repeated by the garment of the figure stretching over the cross. The dress of Joseph, the hair of the Magdalen, the hair and dress of the other Mary, and the light at the horizon, are of a yellow colour. The dress of the Magdalen is of a strong green. The figure descending the ladder is of a purple and brown. We may here notice the union of the blue and yellow, in producing a green, as in the "Entombment," by Titian; the bringing of this colour next to a red; and the presence of a purple, arising from the union of a blue and red.

PLATE VI.

Represents the "Rape of the Sabines," by Rubens. As this work embraces many of the peculiarities of that arrangement of colour which afterwards was diffused through the Flemish and Dutch schools, I shall particularize the different colours of which it is composed, with the situation in which they are placed. The sky is composed of pale yellow

Rubens.

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and blue; the buildings, of a gray, are united to the figures by a small portion being of a faint red; the light is spread over the female group by delicate colours, viz. gray, light flesh tints, and faint yellow; then pink and blue, falling into dull yellow, black, red, and dark blue. The foreground group commences with dark and light purple, red, black, yellow; then green (with a little red above); then brown and blue; a red, of a dull tone, carried up to the figure on the throne, which is surrounded by dull yellow. The buildings in shadow are gray; the drapery at the top, of a purple. We find in this composition the strong colour surrounding the light, or placed where the one group unites with the other. With Rubens this is generally the case, as it prevents the light subsiding too gently, and enables him to keep up his splendour and force. He has given a strong red to clear up the shadow of the female group, and placed a dark blue in the warm side of his composition, to carry the cold colour into this portion of the picture; which is harmonized by a green coming between the blue and yellow. Most of the colours are repeated and broken down by a similarity of tints, except the green (for a faint blush of this colour upon the festoon at the upper part does not amount to this), which thereby acquires a force which it otherwise would not possess. I have noticed in another place the practice of painters' often leaving colours singly, when employed on a prominent object; or for giving such colours the power of harmonizing the others in the picture. In arranging his colours, Rubens always seems to have been guided by his masses of light and of shadow; and to have made use of those tints which contributed to the preservation and enrichment of both. His mass of light is generally composed of delicate colours, and such as do not destroy the breadth; his mass of shadow, of strong warm colours; using dull yellow and brown for those figures under the influence of reflected light. His principal light has, by this means, a freshness of appearance when compared with Titian, whose delicate grays and tender blues are generally swallowed up in a rich glazing of yellow; and Rubens, by keeping blackness out of his shadows, gives the whole that splendour of

effect which arises from the employment of colour in producing the chiaroscuro. His colours are generally placed in harmony with each other, or in contact with such as give them value; such as red and black, black and yellow, green and brown, &c.: a blue, for the purpose of carrying the cool colour into the shadow side of the picture; or a red, for repeating the warm colour in the cool side. Reynolds says, "The difference of the manner of Rubens from that of any other painter before him is in nothing more distinguishable than in his colouring; which is totally different from that of Titian, Coreggio, or any of the great colourists. The effect of his pictures may be not improperly compared to clusters of flowers. All his colours appear as clear and as beautiful; at the same time he has avoided that tawdry effect which one would expect such gay colours to produce; in this respect resembling Barocci more than any other painter." In comparing Rubens with Titian, we find in the flesh of the one an assemblage and variety of tints, from the strongest reds to the most tender grays, vieing often in brightness with the white linen in contact with it; the flesh of Titian is of a more uniform colour, the high lights partaking of half tint, when compared with his white drapery.

The flesh of Rubens has the character of flesh when viewed near, where every variety of tint can be perceived; that of Titian seems sufficiently removed from the eye to lose the little varieties in one general blaze. Perhaps this treatment, from possessing less detail, gives an appearance of a higher character to the flesh of Titian.

The luminous breadth of colour observable in the works of Titian has been successfully imitated by Vandyck, in what is termed his Italian manner; and his pictures of that period possess this character in perfection. His most delicate tints have a richness and warmth resembling the deep tones of Rembrandt: this treatment of the light is supported by deep browns and reds in the shadows and half lights, thereby preventing the light from appearing heavy, and giving it an influence over the whole picture. For example, in his picture of "Susanna," mentioned at page 37,

she is wrapping round her a garment of deep crimson, supported by dark colours in the background; and, in his "St. Sebastian," the saint is surrounded by rich warm tones, produced by the flesh of the figures binding him, the brown horse, and a red flag (carried by one of the figures on horseback), rising up against the dark blue sky. The red is repeated upon the other side by an Asiatic in a red dress; and the blue of the sky, by one of the figures having a little blue drapery. Rubens, in many of his works, has adopted the practice of Veronese in bringing the warm tones of his flesh up against a bright blue sky; producing great brilliancy and lightness of effect. His reds seldom partake of that deep laky cast arising from the glazings of the Venetian painters; neither do his blues assume the depth of those generally found in the skies of Titian: they have, however, the freshness of Veronese, without his coldness; and Rubens's colouring, if it has not the rich splendour of the Venetian masters, has nevertheless a sweetness and force which fully compensates for the absence of many of their best qualities. His leaving his colours unbroken from the palette, and the easy decided manner of his handling, give a great charm to his works; and perhaps the tenderness of his colours upon the lights, although it may impart to his pictures a tinted appearance, contributes to the same end.

In inquiring how far the principles of colour, which govern the great style of painting, are applicable to the inferior walks of the art, it will be necessary to revert to what appears to be the constituent parts of those principles, viz. breadth, or laying out the several colours in large portions; opposition, in bringing light and dark, and hot and cold colours in contact; and strength, in using the colours pure off the palette, or deepening them by repeated glazings. These properties seem to belong more exclusively to the higher walks, from their harmonizing with the grandeur of the subject and greatness of style necessary in the composition, as regards the outline or chiaroscuro; for the most discordant properties produce harmony, if the several parts are upon the same scale; yet, nevertheless, a certain portion of the harshest arrangement, and the

strongest contrast of colour, is necessary in the humblest walks of the art, to give the work that firmness and zest observable in nature. If we examine such works from the time of Rubens, who was the first to ennoble humble scenes by his pencil, to the decline of the Dutch school, we observe a want of decision, a timidity in the colour, and a total absence of those fresh and vigorous tones so truly characteristic of this department of the art. The breadth of local colour is here equally necessary, from its being a strong feature in nature; and referring many colours to the adjoining figures, for their shadow and half tones, becomes in a degree indispensable; since the figures are generally of a smaller size, and less capable of sustaining a colour, with all its intermediate hues from light to dark, upon the same object. Hence also arises the necessity of often employing the three principal colours, viz. red, blue, and yellow, upon one figure, to give such figure that consequence over the others which it ought to have, either from its situation in the group or its importance in the story. In the inferior walks of the art, we ought never to lose sight of that approach to deception, and the natural appearance of objects, arising from their possessing the exact tone of colour observed in nature under the same influence of atmosphere; and here, perhaps, exists a difference in the treatment of a subject in familiar life, and one founded upon ancient history or a poetical basis; the naturalness of the former being indispensable, while the style of drawing necessary in the latter requires a corresponding style of colouring.

In the landscapes of Claude we may perceive a breadth of colour and effect, which has served as an example down to the present time; and which may be considered as furnishing hints for the treatment of subjects embracing a wide expanse of country; a softness in the colour, either from the interposition of atmosphere, or breadth of shadow. His green tints are seldom violent, and his blue of the sky and distance is filled with retiring gray tones. His shadows, if illuminated, are touched upon with cool reflected lights; which treatment, if it deprives them of the rich tones arising from transparent glazings, gives them that truth which they

possess in nature. At sunrise or sunset, his light generally possesses its characteristic feature, and is seldom charged with strong colour; his darkest shadows are prevented from being heavy, and receive a portion of air from the introduction of figures dressed in strong blue draperies; and the warm colours of his buildings and ground are focused, or rendered less harsh by figures dressed in still more positive colours. Reynolds, speaking of the local principles which characterize the Dutch landscape painters, mentions the practice of Claude as opposed to such confined representations of nature:

"Claude Lorraine, on the contrary, was convinced that taking nature as he found it seldom produced beauty; his pictures are a composition of the various draughts which he had previously made from various beautiful scenes and prospects. However, Rubens in some measure has made amends for the deficiency with which he is charged; he has contrived to raise and animate his otherwise uninteresting views, by introducing a rainbow, storm, or some particular accidental effect of light. That the practice of Claude Lorraine, in respect to his choice, is to be adopted by landscape painters, in opposition to that of the Flemish and Dutch schools, there can be no doubt, as its truth is founded upon the same principle as that by which the historical painter acquires perfect form. But whether landscape painting has a right to aspire so far as to reject what the painters call accidents of nature, is not easy to determine; it is certain, Claude Lorraine seldom, if ever, availed himself of those accidents; either he thought that such peculiarities were contrary to that style of general nature which he professed, or that it would catch the attention too strongly, and destroy that quietness and repose which he thought necessary to that kind of painting."

If we contemplate the landscapes of Titian, we find in them the same greatness of style in composition and colour, which pervades his most sublime works. The light of his clouds assumes a deep-toned brightness, aided by the contrast of his dark azure and distances, and is often rendered dazzling by a multiplicity of dark brown leaves rustling up

against it; while the blue and yellow of his skies find a corresponding harmony in the green and brown of his foliage, and ground or stems of his trees. The background to his "Peter Martyr" claims equal admiration with the figures.

The great breadth of colour and effect in the few landscapes from the pencil of Rubens stamps them with that splendour which his knowledge of colour, and his practice in the higher departments of the art, so easily enabled him to accomplish; as he has generally represented his scenery under the influence of a rising or setting sun, he was enabled to employ the most glowing colours with a greater appearance of truth. The yellow light struggling amidst a multiplicity of delicate purples and blues in the sky, assumes a deeper hue as it sheds its colour upon the trees and herbage, until it reaches the foreground in one mass of warm and transparent colour; and though the light commences in pale yellow and white, it terminates in the foreground in rich brown and red. The landscape presented to the National Gallery, by Sir George Beaumont, and "The Watering Place" at Montague House, are excellent examples of his mode of treating colours. In this latter the green of his middle ground, and blue of his distance, are of a more positive character, reminding one more of the colour of Van Uden. His figures are generally employed to enable him to introduce more naturally his strong reds or browns, as his light falls into his shadow side of the picture; or to focus his strong colours in the foreground. If his green colours are sometimes more violent than we might expect to see in nature, under such circumstances, they are kept in check, and counteracted by his warm brown colours. In this particular he has been admirably imitated by Gainsborough; whose later works possess the same brilliancy of effect with the yellow tones approaching more to the depth of Titian. Reynolds, speaking of the licence allowable in departing from truth, instances the representation of a moonlight by Rubens.

"Rubens has not only diffused more light over the picture than is in nature; but has bestowed on it those warm glowing colours by which his

works are so much distinguished. It is so unlike what any other painters have given us of moonlight, that it might easily be mistaken, if he had not likewise added stars, for a fainter setting sun. Rubens thought the eye ought to be satisfied in this case above all other considerations: he might indeed have made it more natural, but it would have been at the expense of what he thought of much greater consequence,—the harmony proceeding from the contrast and variety of colours.

"This same picture will furnish us with another instance, where we must depart from nature for a greater advantage. The moon in this picture does not preserve so great a superiority in regard to its lightness over the object which it illumines, as it does in nature; this is likewise an intended deviation, and for the same reason. If Rubens had preserved the same scale of gradation of light between the moon and the objects which is found in nature, the picture must have consisted of one small spot of light only; and at a little distance from the picture nothing but this spot would have been seen."

This is the case with a picture by Cuyp, in the possession of Lord Grosvenor, where the moon appears a spot; and the effect of the whole has a cold slaty character. But although most poets and painters have represented moonlight shedding its cold influence over a scene, we cannot refuse to Rubens a stricter adherence to nature in this instance than Sir Joshua will allow; as in moonlight we frequently may perceive the most splendid effects of light and colour, both of which have been happily imitated by Vanderneer.

We may give Albert Cuyp as another instance of ennobling the effect of his landscapes by the breadth and splendour of his colour. His colouring in many of his works is of a more chaste character, yet possessing the same brilliancy as the works of Rubens. His blue is less positive, and his green tones are more delicate; indeed, the colouring of his trees seldom exceeds those tints which may be imitated by a mixture of yellow and black. Any positive green he generally introduces into the foreground plants, which by this means repeat the cool tints in the upper

part of his skies, and approach the eye from their being less influenced by that yellow haze which the illuminated atmosphere spreads over his distance and middleground objects. This effect is even heightened by the decided black shadows underneath the foreground leaves, which give them that effect of light, though charged with strong colour, which objects in nature possess. In this he differs from Titian, Rubens, and many others, whose shadows are warm brown. We may also observe a greater attention to the blue tones in his skies; they being seldom deeper than those in nature under the influence of sunshine; whereas many artists increase the blue in the upper part of the sky, to give a greater effect of light to that portion near the situation of the sun; which portion is less charged with colour than is generally supposed. We may also notice the attention to a breadth of local colour in Cuyp, Both, and others of the Dutch school, who painted effects of sunshine. Instead of having the shadows crossing a warm ground cooler than the light, which is to be observed in nature, from their receiving the reflection of the cool part of the sky, we perceive them preserving one general tone. This and many other licences, for the sake of the general effect, the student ought to weigh well before he adopts or rejects; for, as Reynolds justly observes, "An artist is obliged for ever to hold a balance in his hand, by which he must decide the value of different qualities; that when some fault must be committed, he may choose the least."

In subjects of familiar life we find conducting the chiaroscuro and the colouring upon broad scientific principles stamps them with a consequence and interest unattainable by other means. Jordaens has given his merry-makings and scenes of the most vulgar character a splendour of colour and richness of effect which destroy every thing brought in contact with them; and he has tempered the whole by the introduction of delicate gray tones amidst his warmest lights; and has given to his shadows a firmness of colour and lightness of handling which produce the most natural and splendid harmony. Indeed we can trace the principles of colouring introduced by Rubens, and diffused by his pupils Vandyck,

Jordaens, Teniers, and Snyders, into every walk of the art; which renders the Dutch school so completely a school of colour for the contemplation of the student. Sir Joshua says, "The same skill which is practised by Rubens and Titian in their large works is here exhibited, though on a smaller scale. Painters should go to the Dutch school to learn the art of painting, as they would go to a grammar school to learn languages. They must go to Italy to learn the higher branches of knowledge. We must be contented to make up our idea of perfection from the excellences which are dispersed over the world. A poetical imagination, expression, character, or even correctness of drawing, are seldom united with that power of colouring which would set off those excellences to the best advantage; and in this, perhaps, no school ever excelled the Dutch. An artist, by a close examination of their works, may in a few hours make himself master of the principles on which they wrought, which cost them whole ages, and perhaps the experience of a succession of ages, to ascertain.

PLATE VII.

Fig. 1 represents "A Family Group," by Rubens. This is the picture mentioned by Reynolds in his description of the Dusseldorf Gallery. "Over the door is a portrait of a lady, whole length, with her hand on a dog's head; a gentleman behind; a boy (her son) by her side, with a hawk; and a dwarf behind the dog. This is called Lord and Lady Arundel; but certainly does not contain their portraits. The arms on the curtain have a lion and unicorn for supporters, and the garter as a label under." Notwithstanding these remarks of Sir Joshua, I believe the picture does contain the portraits of Lord and Lady Arundel, and that the arms are correct, viz. a lion and horse; with the shield red and white. It has always gone by this designation; and we know that Lord Arundel was ambassador at the time of Rubens, and was afterwards painted by him in England. The principal lights in the picture are composed of delicate colours, viz. the blue, gray, and yellow of the sky; white dog; head and hands of the lady; boy's head; and hawk. The principal mass of dark is the Lady's black dress, diffused by the dull blue curtain, jacket and sleeve of the dwarf, spots upon the dog, carpet, &c. On examining the colours of this picture, we find them divided into a mass of hot and cold; the cool colour spread over the light is carried into the shadow side by the gray hawk, boy's ruff, some cool gray in contact with his red dress, some blue figuring upon the carpet. The yellow dress of the dwarf is repeated by the stockings of the boy and figure behind being of the same colour, and some gold embroidery upon his dress. The boy's red dress, and carpet, make the principal mass of red; it is brought in contact with the black, also by the chair being of

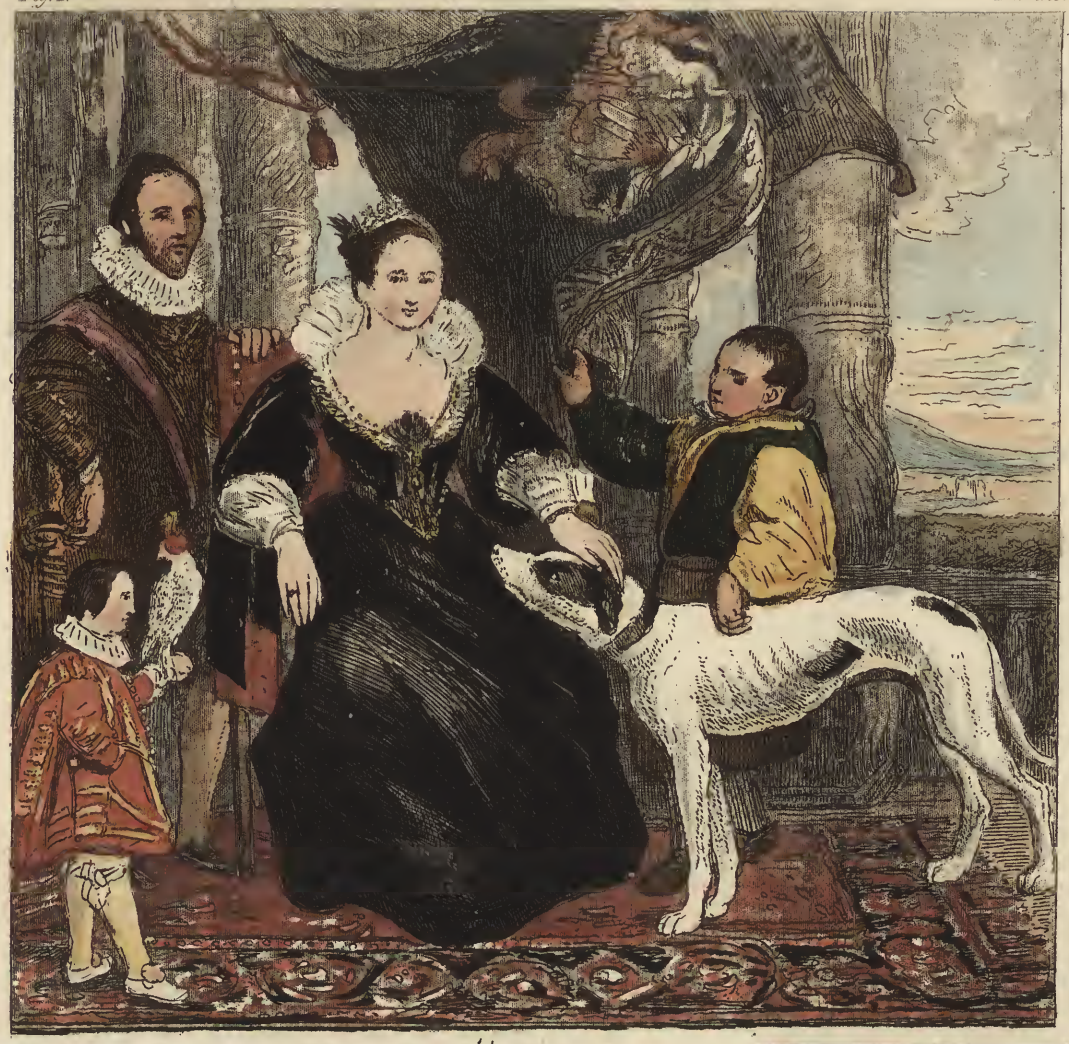

Fig. 2.

Titian.

Fig. 3.

Vandyke.

London, Published 1821, by James Carpenter & Son, Old Bond Street.

the same colour, and carried over to the cool side of the picture by the red mantle of the arms upon the curtain, its strings and tassels. We here perceive the green situated between the blue and yellow; and the red interwoven with the mass of dark. This practice of keeping his red on the shadow side of the picture Rubens learned of the Venetian painters, as by its strength it would destroy the breadth of light, but supports the shadows, and prevents them from being heavy. We may also notice that red is a colour falling into shadow when a picture is placed in a faint light, and that in twilight it becomes a dark. This may be one reason why black and red produce harmony, and contribute to the richness and strength of a work. If the shadow of a picture be supported by warm colours, the effect must be splendid, even though the light should be cold; but if the warm and strong colours be used in the light, and surrounded with cool colours, nothing will prevent the work from being heavy and flat.

Plate VII. *Fig.* 2. Is from the picture of "Titian and his Mistress" in the Louvre. In this composition we perceive the same simplicity and breadth which regulates his greater works. His principal light spreads itself into the two extremes of hot and cold colours with the gentlest harmony; the white linen unites itself with the tints of the flesh, which is softened into the ground by the yellow tint of the hair, rendered delicate and supported by the still stronger colour of the figure with the glass in his hand, viz. brown and deep lake; thus deepening the colours as they lose themselves into the background. As the light descends, it loses itself in the cool portion of the picture passing over green, gray, and blue. The keeping of the two extremes of hot and cold colour at opposite sides of the composition, the using of such colours as enrich and support the chiaroscuro, may be remarked even in this work; which, from its taking in but a portion of the figure, affords so little space for arrangement of colour.

Plate VII. *Fig.* 3. Is "The Portrait of Bentivoglio," by Vandyck, in the Gallery at Florence. This celebrated picture was painted when Vandyck visited Rome, after studying some time the splendid works of the Venetian painters; and, though he was then but twenty years of age, is considered one of his best works. Reynolds, in his notes to Du Fresnoy, speaking of the variety necessary in a single figure, adds: "It is not certain that the variety recommended in a single figure can with equal success be extended to colouring. The difficulty will be in diffusing the colours of the drapery of this single figure to other distant parts of the picture; for this is what harmony requires. This difficulty, however, seems to be evaded in the works of Titian, Vandyck, and many others, by dressing their single figures in black or white. Vandyck, in the famous portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio, was confined in his dress to crimson velvet and white linen: he has, therefore made the curtain in the background of the same crimson colour, and the white is diffused by a letter which lies on the table; and a bunch of flowers is likewise introduced for the same purpose."

We may also notice the table cover, which is also deep crimson velvet. The warm colours are harmonized by a half tone in the oaken floor; the white, and cool grays find a union and repose in the colour of the sky and architecture. This mode of regulating the background by the dress of the figure gives to the whole the greatest breadth and the most harmonious effect. Titian, Vandyck, and others may have been regulated in their colours by the dresses of those who sat to them; but the advantages resulting from their practice have rendered their works so many precedents. For example, we know that bringing the strongest darks in contact with the strongest lights gives the latter the greatest force and clearness; and dark dresses enable the artist to do this in the simplest manner; thereby giving the face and hands firmness, consequence, and brilliancy of effect. Or if a light dress be adopted, these points of light (the face and hands) are united with the figure in one great mass of

light; and on the background we must rely in giving the work solidity. Many artists, when the dress is black, use the background as a middle tint for the flesh and the drapery; and, when the dress is of a middle tint, keep the background dark, to unite the lights of the flesh with the figure; simplicity of effect being more necessary in a portrait than in any other work; since the face ought to be the great point of attraction, and many lights and a diversity of colours distract the attention of the spectator. Rubens and Vandyck have produced this simplicity by a union of the figure with its ground in a variety of ways, either by carrying the colours of the figure into the background, as in the example here given, or by making some part of the dress of the same colour as the ground. Thus we often find in the portraits of Rubens and Vandyck a scarf, of a stone or drab colour, to unite the figure with the ground, and also to give the tints of the flesh clearness and delicacy. Reynolds justly observes that the management of the background requires the greatest skill and the most comprehensive knowledge of the art.

"It must be in union with the figure, so as not to have the appearance of being inlaid, like Holbein's portraits, which are often on a bright green or blue ground. To prevent this effect, the ground must partake of the colour of the figure; or, as expressed in a subsequent line, receive all the treasures of the palette. The background regulates likewise where and in what part the figure is to be relieved. When the form is beautiful, it is to be seen distinctly; when, on the contrary, it is uncouth or too angular, it may be lost in the ground. Sometimes a light is introduced in order to join and extend the light on the figure, and the dark side of the figure is lost in a still darker background; for the fewer the outlines are which cut against the ground, the richer will be the effect, as the contrary produces what is called the dry manner.

"One of the arts of supplying the defects of a scantiness of dress by means of the background, may be observed in a whole length portrait by Vandyck, which is in the cabinet of the Duke of Montagu. The dress

of this figure would have had an ungraceful effect; he has, therefore, by means of a light background opposed to the light of the figure, and by help of a curtain that catches the light near the figure, made the effect of the whole together full and rich to the eye."

PLATE VIII.

Fig. 1. Represents "An Interior," by P. de Hooge; an artist who carried the highest principle of the art into the humblest walks, and thereby gave a consequence, by his decided management of the chiar-oscuro and colour to the most trifling circumstance; stamping the whole with the firmness and truth of nature. In his works we generally find some strong effect of light represented, either upon the broad principle of Cuyp, with the darks telling powerfully, or in the subdued tones of Rembrandt, for the sake of imitating a particular effect of sunshine.

In this composition the strong darks and lights are of the most powerful character, and are brought in contact in the most cutting manner in the centre of the group. The black is extended by the hat of the figure sitting at the window, and the trunk behind the door; also repeated by the black frame. The principal light is composed of the light dresses of the females, and is extended and repeated by the light in the closet, in the window, by the dog, and by the linen of the men; and is diffused upon the wall. The mass of red, formed by the petticoat of the female sitting, keeps up with the powerful opposition of the black and white; and contributes to the harmony, from its strength of colour, without destroying the consequence of either. It is repeated by the back of the chair, and by the cushion; and is carried across by some warm colour in the glass and upon the outer window frame. The yellow jacket

Fig. 1.

P. De Hooge.

Fig. 2.

P. De Hooge.

Fig. 3.

A.V. Ostade.

Fig. 4.

A.V. Ostade.

London. Published by J. Carpenter & Son. Old Bond Street 1827.

makes a focus or point for the yellow colour of the table cover, and is diffused by the floor, and the cabinet in the distant apartment. The blue upon the chair-cover, and the cool tint of the wall in the passage, and upon the window, constitute the cold colours of the picture. The dark wood this master generally keeps of a warm brown, to prevent its interfering with the value of his black dresses. We may observe the great simplicity of the whole arrangement; and that the darks, lights, and strong colours take each agreeable forms; which circumstance enables the artist to give them the greatest force of the palette, without offending the eye. The nearest object is here brought under the most distant; which is often the case with the Dutch masters, to assist the perspective. The blue and red coming in contact on the chair, assists it in keeping its place; and the cool tint in the passage gives a greater appearance of light to the distant apartment.

Plate VIII. *Fig.* 2. In representing an effect of sunshine, De Hooge has confined his light to small portions; thereby giving these portions a greater value. He has kept his middle tint of a low tone; and, to prevent the whole having a heavy effect, he has kept his blacks firm and positive. The yellow lights of the sunshine he has extended by repeating them by a range of red colours, viz. the woman's jacket, the chairs, and shoes on the floor. He has also given a little of the same colour in the window, by representing the tiling, &c. of the houses without. He has brought the red in contact with the blue of the woman's petticoat, and carried it across the picture by the colour of the Dutch tiles skirting the wall, and by the plate upon the chair. This subject, like many of De Hooge's, is confined to a simple effect of light taken from natural objects. The half-shut window is accounted for in the original, by the book having the word *mors* upon it, and the picture on the wall representing a funeral procession indicates the solemn quietness of a sick chamber. In these two subjects of De Hooge, we perceive strong red made use of as

the principal colour. In others of the Dutch school, and frequently in the Venetian masters, we may observe the same harmony.

Plate VIII. *Fig.* 3. "Strolling Musicians at a Cottage Door." In this composition by A. Ostade, we find the warm and cold colours placed upon opposite sides, and upon the most prominent points. In the nearest part of the circle he has brought the strong black and white in contact by the spots upon the dog.

Fig. 4. "An Interior," by A. Ostade. The cool colour accompanies the light in its entrance into the apartment by the blue dress of the child, and the jacket of the man smoking. It communicates with the dresses through the centre of the picture, and is led off by the blue dress of the figure near the window, and the colour of the sky. The red commences on the opposite figure, and is conducted across in a contrary direction. In so small a scale little can be given, but the situation of the hot and cold colours, leaving undefined the whole chain of intermediate tints; but, in making memorandums from pictures, the student will find giving only the principal colours, with their several directions in passing through the composition, will enable him more easily to detect the different modes of employing these two extremes, in giving either breadth or brilliancy to any work. Secondary colours, introduced for the sake of harmony in diffusing the principal, or in giving them value, are of too delicate a nature to be noted down, without the greatest care; as we find if too hot, or too cold, they injure the value of that which they are intended to support. In referring to the several sketches of colour contained in this part of the work, I have endeavoured to point out the various combinations of the several colours, and their results; but if I have not sufficiently dilated upon any subject, it must be remembered that these hints are to be considered as mere heads upon which the student must employ his own contemplations. That which is gained by

reflection and study will, however, be of more service to him in the pursuit of the art than lengthened criticism; since what we acquire with some trouble, we retain; while information obtained without effort often makes but a transient impression.

In directing the student's attention to the contemplation of the works of the several schools, I would have him bear in mind the advice of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who takes every opportunity of recommending a continued study of the works of former artists:

"The great use of studying our predecessors is to open the mind, to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or beautiful in nature: her rich stores are all spread out before us; but it is an art, and no easy art, to know how or what to choose; and how to obtain and secure the object of our choice. Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from nature; but it is an art of long deduction and great experience to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought: these do not swim on the superficies, and consequently are not open to superficial observers.

"Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect, itself unseen. It is the proper study and labour of an artist to uncover and find out the latent cause of conspicuous beauties; and from thence form principles for his own conduct: such an examination is a continual exertion of the mind, as great, perhaps, as that of the artist whose works he is thus studying. The sagacious imitator does not content himself with merely remarking what distinguishes the different manner or genius of each master; he enters into the contrivance in the composition, how the masses of lights are disposed, the means by which the effect is produced, how artfully some parts are lost in the ground, others boldly relieved, and how all these are mutually altered and interchanged according to the reason and scheme of the work. He

admires not the harmony of colouring alone, but examines by what artifice one colour is a foil to its neighbour. He looks close into the tints, examines of what colours they are composed, till he has formed clear and distinct ideas, and has learned to see in what harmony and good colouring consist. What is learned in this manner from the works of others becomes really our own, sinks deep, and is never forgotten; nay, it is by seizing on this clue that we proceed forward, and get further and further in enlarging the principles and improving the practice of our art."

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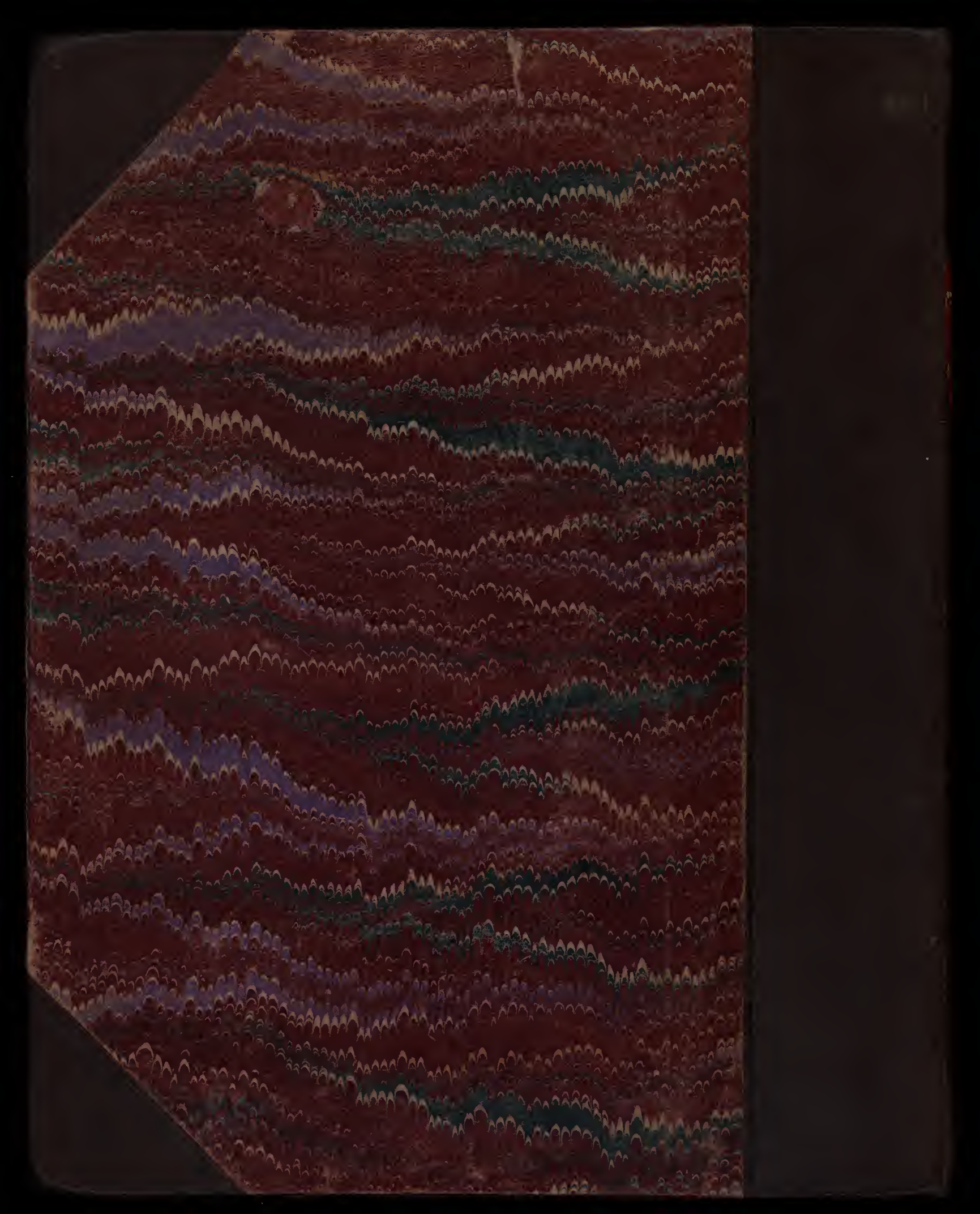
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